

EQUIPPING LAITY FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP: MODELING
A SERVANT'S HEART, IN THE SMALL
RURAL BLACK CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

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The context of this Servant Leadership Deaconate training model is the Race Street Baptist Church in Farmville, Virginia. The hypothesis addresses the problem of a lack of an available systematic servant leadership-training model, which could better equip laity and incumbent deacons in carrying out the duties of the office of deacon more effectively. A qualitative action research methodology consisting of pre and posttest questionnaires was used to measure understanding and attitude changes based on completion of the instructional training modules. Analysis of the data reflected an increase in understanding of the role of deacon.

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DEDICATION

To the late Reverend George W. Manning, my father in ministry, whose pastorate spoke volumes in God's rural context for over seventy-five years. You were truly the epitome of God's true servant leader.

To the deaconate of the Race Street Baptist Church and to all servant leaders within the deaconate in the rural context who seek to be better equipped and empowered for kingdom work of God.

INTRODUCTION

This writer is a product of the rural ministry context and has pastored for the past twenty-two years in that context. The writer has observed, after serving as pastor of the Race Street Baptist for fourteen years, that the majority of the deaconate ministry and those aspiring to the ranks of servant leadership often do not really have a strong undergirding through preparatory training with respect to understanding the role of a servant leader. The writer believes that, in far too many instances while discharging the duties of office of deacon, tradition rises to the forefront. There is a lack of knowledge regarding servant leadership principles and how to adequately discharge those important duties in such a manner that the ministry is impacted positively and holistically. All too often, the writer experiences the problem of issues not being dealt with effectively by the deaconate and ultimately ending up on the pastor's desk without much effort beforehand to bring the matter to resolution. The writer also believes that this is by no means intentional, but due in part to hesitancy because of perceived inability to tread in turbulent waters, but more especially a lack of understanding of servant leadership principles. Training in such principles would equip the deaconate to meet the challenges of their office by better understanding the biblically based tasks of the deaconate. The writer believes that the deacons want to do a good job and in many instances think they are doing a good job, but all too often the results point to an opportunity to be better equipped through servant leadership training.

The writer believes that this aforementioned dilemma has caused the ranks of the deaconate to rely far too much on tradition and authority to face challenges versus being better equipped through a deeper understanding of their roles through biblical-based training in role definition and servant leadership principles.

The six chapters of this document will summarize the writer's endeavors with respect to design, implementation and analysis of a servant leadership-equipping model: Modeling a Servant's Heart. This biblical-based training model will provide comprehensive training in the following areas: General leadership and servant leadership principles; The origin of the deacon, requisites and qualifications of a deacon, deacons' role in the observance of the ordinances of the church, deacons' role in the worship service, deacon's role in ministering to members, deacons serving in the time of crisis (equipping the deacons with caring skills), relationships, and training requirements to become a deacon.

This dissertation will examine the following areas in the foregoing sections. Chapter One, "Ministry Focus," the discussion converges on the formation and rationale for the model of ministry, with emphasis on the writer's Christian life that finds its infant stages in God's rural creation. It follows the writer's ministry context through the years along the winding paths, villages and hamlets, stopping frequently at traditional Houses of Worship and sharing in the fervor of rural congregations. It also reveals the burst of passion that ignites the writer's desire to see the ranks of servant leadership in the small rural black church move within a systematic leadership construct that could become part of the infrastructure of the ministry. This could enable them to more effectively interface with and touch the lives of the congregants.

Chapter Two, “The State of the Art in this Ministry Model,” centers on the direct and indirect review of literature related to the model of ministry. Discussion includes existing models of traditional styles of leadership that lack the necessary components to allow servant leaders to develop the necessary leadership skills for effectively meeting the challenging obligations of the office of deacon.

Chapter Three, “Theoretical Foundation,” provides insight to the theological, biblical and historical foundation building blocks for this particular model of ministry. Also there is a review of literature that undergirds the intricacies of this model.

Chapter Four, “Methodology,” and Five, “Field Experience,” focus the discussion on Qualitative Methodology developed and used in pre and posttest questionnaires during implementation of the training model and the results of the field experience.

Chapter Six, “Reflections from the Field and Beyond,” culminates the experiences of the fieldwork recorded by the writer. Also included in Chapter Six are suggestions and recommendations for replication of this type of ministry model.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

In 1998 at the age of forty-nine, God changed the writer's insights and paradigms with respect to ministry praxis in the rural context. These insights began to emerge with a strong force after exposure to theological seminary training at Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University. A passion emerged within to create a method to better equip servant leaders in rural context ministries starting at the Race Street Baptist Church where the writer is pastor.

This writer has a long rich history in the rural context with twenty-two years in the pastorate. The writer has labored amongst the challenges in many instances created by a lack of training and understanding of the role of the deaconate in the small rural black church. Thus, the writer realizes a tremendous need for a readily available training resource that could serve as an infrastructure to equip laity for servanthood, particularly within the ranks of the deaconate.

The writer will seek to set forth a training model to train deacons for servant leadership in the small rural black church. This model could ultimately serve as a basic catalyst for training of deaconate in any small rural black Baptist Church.

A Faith Walk to the Century Mark

The writer was born and reared in God's rural creation. This rural environment was entrenched in a rich conservative tradition, which was as important as the local laws of the commonwealth. In this country environment, churches were birthed out of other churches in consideration of distance and the lack of transportation. In most instances, circuit rider preachers were the order of the day and worship services were held at most churches on a monthly or bi-monthly basis with few exceptions. Sunday church service consisted of Sunday school at least once a month followed by worship services, which consisted of fire and brimstone preaching. Seeking soul salvation included sitting on the mourner's bench and a public confession of one's sins and confirmation to seek Jesus as Lord and Savior. In most cases, baptisms took place in an outdoor cement pool or the local creek.

Such an environment would hardly seem like the garden spot that one would dream of as the perfect place to live, but the writer's spiritual optical lenses were developed in such a tradition and environment.

The writer's upbringing was in a Christian home in rural Powhatan County located in the rolling woodlands of Central Virginia some twenty miles west of Richmond, the capital city. At a very early age, the writer became familiar with worship at the Second Antioch Baptist Church, which was located directly across the road from where the writer was reared. God-talk and Zion language was the norm. That is, such phrases as, "God don't like ugly and he ain't stuck on pretty" and "God is a merciful, kind and just God" was quite common talk amongst rural congregants.

At the tender age of eight, the writer's spiritual journey began by being drawn to the mourner's bench and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior. It

happened at Second Antioch Baptist Church, that old wood frame church across the road from his home. The old circuit rider preacher Reverend George W. Manning became the writer's father in the ministry and life-long mentor. It was at this early stage in life that rural ministry tradition was truly born and woven into the passions and persona of this young country lad. Even at this early age, the writer noticed the plight of the deacons. They were very stern. During that time, none of them had any formal education but they were devout men of strong faith. The writer recalled that there was no training available for leaders or laity aspiring to the ranks of servant leadership. Thus, most responses from deacons or within the ranks of leadership usually emerged as authoritarian or the grain of tradition rather than from one in tune with knowledge of leadership principles.

The teen years found the writer embracing the leadership ranks of youth ministry and becoming more ingrained in ministry in the rural context. At age seventeen, the writer joined the United States Army. The writer served two overseas tours in Korea and Southeast Asia. It was during these years that spiritual "backsliding" raised its ugly head but God allowed the writer to return home safely and once again kneel down and pray a prayer of thanksgiving in that old country church. The writer's father in ministry, the Reverend George W. Manning was still the pastor.

Marriage, starting a family, the beginning of a formal education and a life-long passion of embracing the ranks of law enforcement followed. It was also at this point that the writer gravitated toward the ranks of leadership and the quest to achieve at a higher level academically. Exposure to training and collaborative learning became of great value in the writer's quest to achieve within the working world. The dream job on the police department in Richmond, Virginia was going extremely well with the writer advancing in rank. However, the writer recognized that an unusual burning spiritual desire deep within

was emerging. During this same period, the writer and his family were active in an urban ministry located in the city of Richmond. Shortly thereafter however, God led the writer and his family back to the old country church in Powhatan. Suddenly there was a strong urge to help within the ranks of leadership and share those gifts and skills, with which the writer had been blessed through various life-long experiences. The church saw fit to set the writer aside for the work of the deaconry.

Shortly thereafter, God did a strange thing in the writer's life. God suddenly changed the writer's occupation from the demands and challenges of policing to the ranks of corporate America. It was a frightening moment to leave the security of a job with much promise and security and step into the unknown challenges and uncertainties of corporate America. What was so unusual as well was the fact that the company, Reynolds Metals Company, came seeking the writer with a lucrative job proposal. Things happened fast. The day soon came to turn in the gun and shield. It was also realized that God's plan for ministry involvement was really at work. This sudden change actually opened the door for continuity in attendance and devotion to worship on a regular basis back home in the rural context. That is, in the new working environment there was no weekend work or different shift assignments. Also during this period, there was born within a clearer recognition of the writer's divine call to ministry.

At the home church things began to happen at a very fast pace. Ordination as a deacon was a huge step but certainly a welcome opportunity to be a blessing in Kingdom work of God. Very early in the office of deacon, the writer gained a better understanding of the plight of the older deacons. Observation and involvement in ministry exposed a strong need for systematic training within the ranks of servant leadership. The writer had some formal education but that did not set forth the qualifications to serve the office of

deacon as effectively as necessary. The writer realized that trial and error and on-the-job training were not good substitutes for specific training in servant leadership. At that time however, the opportunity did not present itself nor was it the right time for the writer to take the lead in such an endeavor.

After two years as a deacon, in January 1982 the writer yielded to God's call to preach the gospel. The initial sermon followed in March the same year. Shortly thereafter, the writer enrolled at Virginia Union University School of Theology's certificate program, which is now Evans-Smith Bible Institute. Two years after the initial sermon there was a call to pastor the Chester Grove Baptist Church, a rural ministry in adjacent Amelia County. Ordination followed in September 1984 and installation as pastor followed three months later in December.

Interestingly, the writer found himself situated in a very similar spiritual environment and ministry context to that in which he had been reared at Second Antioch Baptist Church. Rural traditional worship, conservative doctrine and edicts were the order of the day. Moreover, the ranks of leadership, particularly within the deaconate remained traditional with no infrastructure to create any synergy through systematic training to broaden horizons. Chester Grove Baptist Church was a one-Sunday-a-month worship ministry. However, Sunday school and bible study were held on a weekly basis. The church was neither supportive nor interested in changing that arrangement, especially the Chairman of Deacons.

After six years of labor in that ministry context as pastor, in 1990 the writer was promoted within the ranks of leadership in corporate America. This move to mid-level managerial ranks led to much travel and a great deal of exposure to the world of leadership and empowerment. About a year later, God made another sudden change in

the writer's life. The writer received a call to another pastorate that was an every-Sunday worship ministry. The Race Street Baptist Church in Farmville, Virginia, was located in a small Township. This was an every Sunday ministry but still steeped in rural tradition. However, by this time the writer was somewhat better trained in leadership concepts through his endeavors in corporate America. This also caused the writer to better recognize leadership deficiencies within the servant leadership ranks of rural context ministry. This held particularly true within the ranks of the deaconate at Race Street Baptist Church.

The Birth of a Passion to Change a Traditional Leadership Paradigm

Upon embarking upon new leadership challenges in the new pastorate on an every Sunday basis, the writer still found the labor to be entrenched in the challenges of lack of leadership progression so inherent to small rural black churches. It became apparent to the writer that a tremendous need existed for a leadership training resource which could serve as an infrastructure to better equip laity for servanthood, particularly within the ranks of deaconry.

The journey through Seminary at Virginia Union University School of Theology heightened the passion to change the leadership paradigm within the ranks of rural context leadership. By this time, the writer had passed the age of fifty and was still struggling with challenging servant leadership issues in the rural context. However, there was a new passion ignited to make a difference. Thus, the writer now bundled twenty-two years of rural context pastoral experience as the fuel to strive to make an indelible mark through the aforementioned model.

However, with respect to the development of the aforementioned leadership model, from the very onset the model begs several questions: 1.) Can the true servant

leader serve effectively in kingdom work of God based solely on ordinary authoritative leadership principles? 2.) Can the servant leader in the small rural church rise to the mandates of servant leadership principles against the grain of tradition and enhance effectiveness in their role? 3.) Most importantly, can the small rural black church rise to another level of leadership through being better equipped through implementation of a systematic model of training laity for the ranks of servant hood? The writer will seek to set forth a model with respect to equipping laity through a biblically-based training model in the small rural black church through the collaborative approach with the Pastor playing an integral role. This model could ultimately serve as a basic catalyst for training of deaconate in any small rural Baptist church.

Meet the Rural Stakeholders

The ministry focus group of this project model was selected laity and incumbent deacons of the Race Street Baptist Church located in rural Southside Virginia in Prince Edward County in the township of Farmville. Specifically, the stakeholders were three members of laity, of which two are college graduates and one high school graduate. The four incumbent deacons' educational level consists of varying degrees with one high school graduate. The participants have varying degrees of service from two to sixteen years.

The involvement of these participants in this ministry model allowed them the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills with regard to general leadership, servant leadership principles, and duties of the deaconate. It is the goal of this model to equip each participant to better understand the principles of servant leadership and individual role of deacon utilizing and modeling the portrait of Jesus with compassion and humility. The uniqueness of this ministry model is that in the small rural black

church not only is there a lack of available systematic leadership training, but generally an inherent deficiency within the first link of leadership between pastor and congregants.

The ministry context is located in Prince Edward County, Virginia within the township of Farmville. Prince Edward County has a population of 19,720 and the town of Farmville has a population of 6,845 according to the 2000 censuses. In addition, the demographics reflect the following percentages of White and black: 62.2% white for the county and 63.8% within the town of Farmville. The population for blacks is 35.8 and 36.2% respectively.¹ This area is historical in several perspectives. It has a recorded dark history of racial prejudice and injustice towards Blacks, particularly noted for its massive resistance to desegregation of schools whereby the public schools in Prince Edward County were closed from 1959 to 1965. This adverse and despicable action ultimately became part of the Supreme Court landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.²

This demoralizing injustice had a tremendous negative impact on the overall educational status of many people, especially within the black communities. Moreover, it also reflected negatively within the congregations and leadership ranks of the local black churches and communities at large. Over the years, this educational deficiency has come full circle and is quite visible within the leadership ranks of many of the churches in the rural context, including Race Street Baptist Church. In speaking with a fellow pastor and Civil Rights Activist from that era, Reverend J. Samuel Williams, he stated, “the plight of the Black Church was crippled greatly by the closing of the schools for those five dark

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, “Prince Edward County Virginia Census, 2000”; available from <http://Quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/51/51147.html>; Internet; accessed October 28, 2005.

² National Park Service, “Brown v. Board: Five Communities that Changed America”; available from <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/www/ps/lessons/121/brown/>; Internet; accessed October 28, 2005.

years.” He further asserted, “This single injustice has hampered the leadership ranks of our churches, but God has sustained our Being.”³ The writer concurs with Reverend Williams in that the writer is also a native of an adjacent county, Powhatan, and has seen the struggles of the people within the leadership ranks seeking a more excellent way. The writer is all too familiar with the ugly demon of school segregation of that era. It was just this past year in 2005 that the fiftieth anniversary of that Supreme Court landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* was celebrated in the Prince Edward County area. Governor Mark Warner also vowed to appropriate Scholarship monies for those affected by the closing of the schools during that era.⁴ There was also a graduation ceremony held in May of 2004, whereby many students from that era received their honorary high school diplomas, several of them from the Race Street Baptist Church.⁵

Race Street Baptist Church enjoys a rich religious heritage but somewhat of a dark history from a couple of perspectives. The church was established in 1894 and over the years has had seven pastors, including the writer who has pastored there fourteen years.⁶ Even though the church is located in a township with a population of 6,845, the congregants still have a rural mentality with respect to worship and ministry. It is deeply rooted in the rural tradition and culture, including dynamics regarding laity to servant leadership. In short, Race Street is not the typical Black First Baptist Church of Any town, USA, which is often referred to as a “silk stocking or high church” type of

³ J. Samuel Williams, Pastor of Levi Baptist Church. Meherrin, Virginia, interviewed by the researcher.

⁴ Kathryne Orth, “Warner: Students will be Helped: Governor Vows to get funds for those hurt by Massive Resistance,” *Richmond Times Dispatch*, May 15, 2004, sec. A, 1..

⁵ Rob Chapman, “Graduates Remember,” *Farmville Herald* (Farmville, VA), May 19, 2004, 1.

⁶ 104th Anniversary Souvenir Booklet of Race Street Baptist Church, Farmville, Virginia (October 1998).

ministry. Rather, it is aligned with what one in the black community would call a “down-home, foot stomping, Holy Ghost-filled Ministry.” The membership on the rolls is approximately 347 with a regular worship attendance of approximately 125 to 140 weekly. The majority of the congregants are typically from the segregated era or direct descendants thereof and of low to medium economic background with some exceptions. At Race Street Baptist Church, this composite has attributed to the lack of creating a sustained infrastructure with respect to servant leadership training. That coupled with the aforementioned history of educational challenges sets the stage for a potential challenge within the leadership base. However, God is continually working and pointing to new horizons to be realized for servant leaders.

Also inscribed in the recorded history and captured in the 1998 Church Anniversary Journal is a quote by the famed black Activist and writer, W.E.B. Du Bois in his writings on sociology and the black community. Du Bois wrote a caption on “The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia.” According to the printed history in the booklet, he wrote, “There is also a second Baptist Church of a little lower grade, with more habitual noise and shouting.”⁷ He was referring to Race Street Baptist Church. Upon reading this, I initially took offense and indignation with those remarks. However, I later pondered the statement and, after reflecting on Dr. Du Bois’s comparison of the social status amongst various blacks and also what I had actually experienced as pastor, I thought differently. The writer believes that the description used by Dr. DuBois does in part reflect a vast segment of the black rural population in that context.

⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

The Lord Jesus Christ the master teacher, equipped, empowered, and trained his disciples to touch the lives of others. The scripture records that as Jesus journeyed through towns and villages he said to his disciples “The harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest; that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:37-38 KJV). These were ordinary men from different occupations. This small band of laity was destined for servanthood in God’s kingdom work. Little did they know at that time that they would soon better understand the role to which they had been called and the necessity of compassion and humility in touching the lives of others. Moreover, little did they realize at that moment in time that they would soon be equipped and empowered for servanthood in the kingdom work of God through Jesus’ collaborative leadership training course.

Mike Murdock in his book, *The Leadership Secrets of Jesus*, explains that Jesus spoke with authority on the issue of timing and preparation. He suggests that Jesus the master Servant Leader, in his interaction with his disciples always took time for preparation. He states, “The quality of preparation determines the quality of performance. Jesus educated those he mentored. Proverbs 9:9 ‘*Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.*’”¹ Murdock

¹ Mike Murdock, *Leadership Secrets of Jesus* (Tulsa, OK: Honor Books, 1996), 91.

contends that one must aggressively pursue educational endeavors at every level of the organization in order that empowerment and new horizons are realized. He concludes with these words, “no one is born with great knowledge; you become what you are. You discover what you know.”²

The writer has learned from laboring and ministering in the rural context that pointing one to the stair steps of servant leadership is an easier process than equipping them to reach the top successfully. It is at this point in this ministry model that a review of literature will be explored pertaining to the topic of equipping laity for servant leadership. It is the writer’s hope that the intervention of this model will equip them to systematically employ the principles that are essential to carrying out the mandates of their leadership roles within the deaconate.

The writer will examine the following headings: What is servant leadership and who are the laity? The writer will expound upon what other authors in this field have said about laity and servant leadership.

Second, the writer will explore the state of the art in this Ministry model through a review of literature with a brief synopsis of the concept of equipping. Thirdly, the writer will expound upon the role of the deaconate as servant leader. This will entail a review of literature in considering the role of servant leader deacons within the ministry infrastructure in addition to the qualities of a deacon, which embraces the requirement of a “servant heart.” The section will conclude with a perspective of how the aforementioned intertwine in the collaborative leadership process.

²Ibid., 91.

The Make-up of Servant Leaders and Leadership

Dr. James Henry Harris in his book, *The Courage to Lead*, states, “It can be said that it is difficult for any leader to excel or be effective in one’s role without being adequately trained and prepared in the many sensitive aspects of the role.”³ This statement strongly suggests that it is of utmost importance for laity to be equipped and empowered for service. Servant leaders involved in the kingdom work of God represent a vital and special ingredient within the ministry. Servant leaders are not only the cornerstones of the ministry along with the pastor, but are also called upon frequently to interface with congregants, oftentimes on very sensitive issues or in times of crisis. Moreover, the role necessitates a leadership style woven into the fabric of compassion, humility, and spirituality, which undergirds the understanding of the basic servant leadership principles in the discharge of those duties. Consequently, the equipping of those in such a capacity becomes a matter of extreme importance within the ministry.

Robert K. Greenleaf, who is a leading authority on servant leadership, poses a very important rhetorical question in his book, *Servant Leadership*. Greenleaf asks, “Who is the Servant Leader?”⁴ He also answers the question from his views as a student of organization; how things get done; and what works best. He asserts,

A leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness. Servant ship is worn deep down on the inside. Leadership is bestowed upon a man who is by nature a servant. It was something given, or assumed, that can be taken away. His servant nature is the real man, not bestowed, nor assumed, and not to be taken away. He is servant first, only by dissecting the term and separating each role can the answer be given . . . The Servant

³ James Henry Harris, *The Courage To Lead* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 3.

⁴ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 8, 9.

leader is servant first . . . and that begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve; to serve first. Everything begins with the initiation of an understanding of that which one sets out to do or embrace.⁵

Greenleaf then narrows his perspective on servant-ship with respect to religion.

He cites the Greek term *religio* meaning to “rebind.” He states,

. . . servant leadership in the religious realm seeks to rebind humankind to the cosmos, to heal the pervasive alienation. The church is the institutionalization of humankind’s religious concerns. As an institution, it seems not unlike other institution with other missions. The churches, too, seem troubled to find how best to do what they have set out to do. Churches are needed to serve the large numbers of people who need meditative help if their alienation is to be healed and wholeness of life achieved, but for the most part, churches do not seem to be serving well. Thus, the essence of servant leader must rise to the forefront and be exemplars for other institutions.⁶

The writer believes that Greenleaf hits the nail on the head in terms of the collaborative foresight of the proposed servant leadership model. The perspective of churches serving large numbers of people who stand in need of meditative help certainly includes the deaconate at the forefront. Kent R. Hunter in his book, *Move Your Church to Action*, states that, “servant leadership has been transformed by the power of the gospel and finds its identity in Jesus Christ, who came to serve. It is also transforming leadership in that it seeks to be involved in significant, radical, and basic change, bringing the followers and others more and more into connection with the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus. The servant leader is not insecure about their positions; is a true servant of others; genuine, transparent, concerned with the mission of God and not about making a living.”⁷

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 218, 219.

⁷ Kent R. Hunter, *Move Your Church To Action* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 2000), 105.

This assertion by Hunter somewhat furthers Greenleaf's views and deepens the idea of servant leadership strictly in the realm of the gospel and the kingdom work of Jesus Christ.

J. Oswald Sanders in his book, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*, is helpful at this point as he raises the question,

Are Leaders Born or Made? Surely, both. On the one hand, leadership is an "elusive and electric quality that comes directly from God. On the other, leadership skills are distributed widely among every community and should be cultivated and developed. Often our skills lie dormant until a crisis arises.

Some people become leaders by luck and timing. A crisis comes, no one better qualified steps forward, and a leader is born. But closer investigation usually reveals that the selection was not accidental but was more the result of hidden training that made the person fit for leadership. Joseph is a perfect example. He became prime minister of Egypt through circumstances that most people would call "lucky stars." In fact his promotion was the outcome of thirteen years of rigorous, hidden training under the hand of God.

When we contrast natural and spiritual leadership, we see just how different they are: (See Table 1)

People without natural leadership skills do not become great leaders at the moment of conversion. Yet a review of the history of the church reveals that the Holy Spirit sometimes releases gifts and qualities that were dormant beforehand. When that happens, a leader is born.⁸

Sanders also quotes A. W. Tozer, who wrote:

A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of {circumstances} There was hardly a great leader from Paul to the present day but was drafted by the Holy Spirit for the task, and commissioned by the Lord to fill a position he had little heart for The man who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. The true leader will have no desire to lord it over God's heritage, but will be humble, gentle, self-sacrificing and altogether ready to follow when the Spirit chooses another to leader.⁹

⁸ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994), 29.

⁹ Ibid., 30.

Table 1. Natural and Spiritual Leadership

Natural	Spiritual
Self-confident	Confident in God
Knows Men	Also knows God
Makes own decisions	Seeks God's will
Ambitious	Humble
Creates methods	Follows God's example
Enjoys command	Delights in obedience to God
Seeks personal reward	Loves God and others
Independent	Depends on God

Harris Lee in his book, *Effective Church Leadership*, also embraces the principles of servant leadership. Lee uses a quote by Albert Einstein. Einstein mentions leadership qualities in a tribute to his friend and colleague, H. S. Lorentz. He states,

His never-failing kindness and generosity and his sense of justice, coupled with a sure and intuitive understanding of people and human affairs, made him a leader in any sphere he enters. Everyone followed him gladly for we felt he never set out to dominate but only to serve.

What Einstein refers to is not leadership skill or leadership style, but something less tangible, perhaps less teachable—qualities of the person that include attitude, perspective, and even philosophy of life. It is important for leaders and potential leaders to know what they are, and to nurture them in their own lives.¹⁰

A Perspective on Equipping Laity in Kingdom Work

In advancing this idea of equipping laity for servant leadership to meet the demands of ministry and the role of the deacon, one must consider whom that entails.

The Apostle Paul sets the stage for this in his letter to the church at Corinth stating that the New Covenant has made the weakest, most inadequate people competent to minister:

And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think and thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God: Who also has made us able minister of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Corinthians 3:4-6 KJV)

This passage helps one to understand the power that God has bestowed upon the New Testament Church during this Pentecostal age. James D. Anderson and Ezra E. Jones writes the following in their book, *The Management of Ministry: Building Leadership in a Changing World*, “The church is a servant people, a kingdom people, and a gifted people endowed with multifaceted gifts and graces of ministry.”¹¹ The idea of equipping laity for servant leadership is an essential component of this model in creating a systematic training infrastructure. The church is the context in which holistic ministry takes place. It is the sacred arena in which the servant leader pastor enables others to prepare to advance the kingdom work of God through various ministry bodies. The deaconate stands at the forefront of such ministries. One can appreciate the fact that when there is not a strategy for systematically training or equipping leaders then the acquisition of knowledge becomes happenstance.

Greg Ogden, in his book, *The New Reformation*, states that “the reason for a pastor’s professional training is to use this knowledge to equip and deplore God’s people for ministry . . . It is a fundamental approach, that needs to be integral to the identity of

¹⁰ Harris Lee, *Effective Church Leadership* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1989), 87.

¹¹ James D. Anderson and Ezra E. Jones, *The Management of Ministry: Building Leadership in a Changing World* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1993), 17.

anyone who is pastor.”¹² Thus, it is the role of the pastor to initiate collaborative processes and help those men and women practice and perfect the ministry to which they have been called or set aside.

This endeavor of preparing laity for servanthood and the training of leaders is also uniquely described by the writings of Michael J. Christensen. Christensen authored the book, *Equipping The Saints: Mobilizing Laity For Ministry*. Christensen says,

The concept of equipping the saints is a powerful manifestation demonstrating that there are not two missions, one for the ordained and the other for the laity. There is only one mission: God’s mission. The mission of the Crucified Christ was to God’s chosen people, Israel (“the lost sheep of the house of Israel” is how Jesus put it). The mission of the risen Christ is to the world as a whole, not to the church. The mission of the church is to join Christ’s mission in the world. It is this mission that defines and designs the nature of the church. It is God’s mission that constitutes and commissions the church, or in the words of the theologian Jurgen Moltmann, “What we have to learn. It is not that the church has a mission, but the very reverse: the mission of Christ creates its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood.”¹³

Christensen sets forth a clear and concise mandate for the church to create an atmosphere of learning for its leaders. The writer views this assertion as aligned with the portrait of Jesus as the Master Servant Leader who constantly collaborates with his disciples in regards of the office to which they have been called.

The Deaconate: Leading the Way for Servant Leaders

Howard B. Foshee in his book *Now that You’re a Deacon* opens chapter one entitled: “Understand Your Work as a Deacon” with the phrase “Now that you are a

¹² Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 97.

¹³ Michael J. Christensen, *Equipping The Saints: Mobilizing Laity For Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 10.

deacon, there is great work for you to do.”¹⁴ Foshee quotes a newspaper article about Dr. John Tyndall, the renowned British scientist who excelled in molecular physics. He states, “Someone asked Dr. Tyndall who had been of the greatest influence on his life. He answered quickly that the person of greatest influence had been an old friend who had lived with him through the years as a servant. Dr. Tyndall said, ‘Each morning my friend would knock on my bedroom door and call out: ‘It is 7:00 o’clock, sir. Get up! You have great work to do today!’”¹⁵ Foshee also furthers his introductory phrase. He states,

The same is true for you as a new deacon. You have great work to do today. I hope that you feel God’s energy flowing through you. My wish for you is that you experience a sense of divine purpose as did Jesus when he said, “I must be about my Father’s business.” And feel the thrill of service as Paul when he said, “For this day was I born!” You can find no happier person than the individual who is busy for the Master, using his gifts in Christian service. One of nature’s masterpieces truly is the man absorbed in his work and loving every minute of it. So much depends on you.¹⁶

The writer believes that this quote is quite helpful in discussing the work of the office of the deacon as servant leader. Woven into Foshee’s powerful introductory are many desirable spiritual qualities of the servant leaders that sets the mandate for the deacon to exhibit caring skills, compassions, and humility. Undoubtedly, the deacon leads the way for servant leadership.

Moreover, one can learn from the writings of the apostle Paul that leaders in the church are to be above reproach and of good reputation. Paul writes to Timothy in the ministry these words, “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure

¹⁴ Howard B. Foshee, *Now that You’re a Deacon* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1975), 9.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

conscience, And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless . . . for they that used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 3:7).

Brian J. Dodd, in his book *Empowered Church Leadership*, also captures Paul’s thoughts to Timothy. In chapter four on “God’s Power in Cracked Pots,” Dodd quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer on his comments regarding the office of Bishop as set forth by Paul to Timothy. Bonhoeffer says,

The desire we so often hear expressed today for “Episcopal figures,” “priestly men,” “authoritative personalities” springs frequently enough from a spiritually sick need for the admiration of men, for the establishment of visible human authority, because the genuine authority of service appears to be so unimpressive. There is nothing that so sharply contradicts such a desire as the New Testament itself in its description of a bishop (I Tim. 3:1ff.).

One finds there nothing whatsoever with respect to worldly charm and the brilliant attributes of a spiritual personality. The bishop is the simple, faithful man, sound in faith and life, who rightly discharges his duties to the Church. His authority lies in the exercise of his ministry. In the man himself there is nothing to admire.¹⁷

Dodd’s account of Bonhoeffer’s assertion reminds us of the fact that Paul in the same chapter and the very next verse stated, “Likewise the deacon . . .”¹⁸ This brings full circle the essence of the heart and plight of the servant leader deacon.

Paul also writes about the importance of being an example to others, about being properly motivated, fulfilling the responsibilities, not only by constraint but willingly, and about having an attitude of humility. The writer believes that this idea of humility

¹⁷ Brian D. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 79, 80.

¹⁸ I Timothy 3:8

and compassion are common threads that are desirable of the deacon and must be demonstrated in all that they do.

The apostle Peter also says,

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God in your charge, not by restraint but willingly, not for Shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. Like wise you that are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves all of you with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (I Peter 5: 1-5)

The writer believes that one's spirituality determines the quality of service that one is able to offer to God and others. Spirituality can be defined as a way of walking, a manner of life, and an attitude that are under the influences of the spirit of God, which, in turn, guides one's thoughts and actions. Gustavo Gutierrez in his book, *We Drink from our Own Wells*, shares some very powerful insights on the importance and its connection with servant leadership. He states, "spirituality is a manner of life that gives a profound unity to our prayer, thought, and action."¹⁹

With this thought in mind, the question may arise as to how this idea of compassion and humility is developed? Certainly one can understand that it is far more than a notion and that it is not developed on its own. Howard Thurman in his book, *Disciplines of the Spirit*, implores the reader to view the image of a person with a "green thumb." He states, "When a person is said to have a green thumb we mean that he or she seems to have an instinctive ability to set up good conditions for growth . . . it may be a

¹⁹ Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 88.

certain feeling for the right depth at which to plant, or a sense of rightness as to soil, moisture, or the happy combination.”²⁰

Thurman’s concept of the person who has a “green thumb” is the idea of setting up the proper condition for growth. The writer has a pastor friend who lives in the country and raises large gardens each year. He is known throughout the county for raising extremely large watermelons and cantaloupes. He is the only person that the writer knows that raised yellow watermelons. He has won the blue ribbon numerous times over the years at the Amelia county fair for exhibiting watermelons well over sixty-five pounds and cantaloupes in excess of thirty pounds. The writer asked him the inquiring question; “why are your watermelons and cantaloupes always so much larger than others on the market?” The farmer friend produced a wide grin and took much pride in telling the writer “proper conditions must exist to stimulate that kind of growth, you have got to know what to put in the soil.”²¹

Correspondingly, one can glean from the aforementioned that in order for the servant leader’s spirituality to be developed, the proper conditions for growth must be

²⁰ Howard Thurman, *Disciplines of the Spirit* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1989), 16.

²¹ G. Wilson Monroe, interviewed by the researcher. Amelia, Virginia, July 12, 2005.

established. Thurman also states, “If life is to manifest itself in a particular form, it poses the conditions, and the discipline, essential to that end.”²² The writer believes that this collaborative leadership model sets the stage for that kind of growth amongst the laity and others of the deaconate in quest of a more excellent way in striving to be better empowered and equipped for their office.

C. Gene Wilkes in his book, *Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the Secrets of Servant Leadership*, is also helpful at this point in furthering this discussion which leads to another component of the model which is the heart of the servant leader. He states, “True humility does not lead to exhaustion but frees us to serve others. In God’s kingdom, achievement is not the goal, but we will never grasp that until we have learned humility. Then we can relax and serve, knowing that any honor that comes to us is given, not earned.”²³

Wilkes also says,

The heart makes it happen. A servant’s heart is essential for this kind of leadership. This state of heart allows God to reveal and define the life-driving mission in a person’s life. This condition also brings the leader into the lives of those they lead. Without that spirit, the leader remains aloof and distant from those carrying out the mission with them. A servant’s heart allows the leader to put aside his or her own agenda in order to carry out that mission. I am convinced that only a relationship with the master Servant Leader, Jesus Christ, can produce such a heart condition. Jesus’ priorities in leadership are different from how we tend to lead today.²⁴

In concluding, John C. Maxwell adds additional insights about the idea of a servant’s heart. He states in his book *Think on These Things*, “A leader’s ability to

²² Thurman, *Disciplines of the Spirit*, 16.

²³ C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the Secrets of Servant Leader* (London: Lifeway Press, 1998), 37.

²⁴ Ibid.

achieve anything great for God begins in his or her heart and mind.”²⁵ His initial comments confirm Wilkes and Murdock’s assertions. However, Maxwell shares another very important aspect of Servanthood in a short discourse on “Your Reaction Show Your Christianity.” He writes,

Jesus says in Matt. 5:43-48, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect.”

Jesus not only taught this message but also lived it. Jesus experienced misunderstanding, ingratitude, and rejection. But He was never bitter, discouraged, or overcome. To Him, every obstacle was an opportunity. Broken heartedness? An opportunity to overcome sin? An opportunity to forgive. His uncommon response to the everyday problems caused those around Him to ask, “What manner of man is this?”

People are known not by how they act when they’re in control, but by how they react when things are beyond their control.²⁶

The Necessity of a Servant Leadership Infrastructure

Next, the writer will provide a brief review of scholarly writers on the collaborative leadership model at hand. It will start with assertions by A.B. Bruce, author of *The Training of the Twelve: Ageless Management Principles for Developing Competent Leaders*. Bruce writes a segment in his book called, *Fishers of Men*. Bruce says,

The twelve disciples only arrived at their final intimate relationship with Jesus by degrees . . . there are distinguishable stages in their

²⁵ John C. Maxwell, *Think On These Things* (Kansas City, MO: The Beacon Press, 199), 1.

²⁶ Maxwell, 29, 30.

history of their fellowship with Him: first they were mere believers, second was fellowship in the form of uninterrupted attendance on his person involving an abandonment of secular and understanding the spiritual through guided principles and teachings. Ultimately, Jesus invoked the final stage only after systematic teachings, tutelage and empowerment and thus they were selected for Servant Leadership, better enabling them to touch and empower the lives of others.²⁷

The writer believes that this statement gives a view of the master Servant Leader, Jesus, grooming those destined for the ripe fields of servanthood. One can observe that it is intentional instruction and done in stages. This is what the writer has set out to do with respect to this servant leadership model.

Walter Brueggemann in his book, *Cadence of Home: Preaching among Exiles* writes with respect to “Rethinking Church Models through Scriptures.” Brueggemann helps one to better understand the need of continually looking for that more excellent way within the ministry. He states, “‘Models of the Church’ is itself an important matter and suggests a self-critical awareness that we are practitioners of a model may not be the only or the best one.”²⁸

This notion supports the premise for the proposed model in that there are remnants of models in some situations, but certainly no infrastructure that provides for leadership training within the autonomous organizational structure of most small rural churches. This holds true for the small rural black Baptist church, which includes Race Street Baptist Church.

Brueggemann also writes a chapter on “The Disciplines of Readiness.” Here he discusses Israel’s journey (church in the wilderness) and contrasts it to the Christian

²⁷ A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: Ageless Management Principles for Developing Servant Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1988), 11.

²⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *The Cadence Of Home: Preaching among Exiles* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 111.

journey of today. He states, “the people reach a stage of self sufficiency upon encountering the Sovereign demand of God . . . This demand was set forth from the lips of the Prophets, which ultimately required a visible and inescapable mandate in the concrete processes of ministry and other aspects of the lives of the people.”²⁹ From Brueggemann’s assertion one can discern the need for the equipping model of empowerment for the servant leaders within rural congregations.

The book, *Studying Congregations*, by Nancy T. Ammerman et al. cites two areas that speak to this idea. Robert J. Schreiter writes a discourse on “Theology in the Congregation: Discovering and Doing.” Schreiter states, “the concept of theology in the congregation equates to ‘faith seeking understanding.’ Understanding happens on many levels within the ministry . . . it involves grasping more clearly what our experiences of God tell us about who God is and what God has done for us. This knowledge ultimately comes to us indirectly . . . the congregation must always engage in a quest to see more and come to terms with that which one sees or receives understanding.”³⁰

Schreiter’s comments plays prominently in servant leaders stepping outside the basic principles of the authoritative leadership construct and embracing the applications and temperament needed to be effective in touching the lives of the congregants. Schrieter further states that, “it’s about action.”³¹ Obviously, understanding has to be achieved through some vehicle that remains an important part of the ministry. It has to be available

²⁹ Ibid., 112.

³⁰ Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 23.

³¹ Ibid., 24.

to allow congregants to learn and grow in the faith. Therefore, seeking specific preparatory training in the stated areas would certainly be a vehicle to reach such a goal of better understanding resulting in the possibility of enhancement of spiritual growth of the small rural black church.

Jackson W. Carroll, another contributing writer to this book, stresses, “it is the pastor and lay-leaders’ responsibility to interact with others in the congregation and assist in the unfolding of their story . . . the servant leader and those who would dare serve must be acquainted with every aspect of the congregation. That is, be cognizant of their needs. Thus, as the story unfolds, learning and doing takes place.³² Again, the writer’s premises are reinforced through Carroll’s assertions with regard to the necessity of learning within the ranks of servanthood.

The book, *Rural Worship*, written by Herbert H. Wintermeyer cites the various similarities and differences between the rural and urban church. Not so much from a perspective of size, but from the perspective of the inner workings of each ministry design that affects the pulse of the ministry and its ability to clearly articulate the vision and fully embrace the mandates of the Great Commission. Wintermeyer says,

Spiritual problems are much the same. They both face the same world politically and economically. They attend the same schools, which teach the same principles and beliefs. They both face the same mystery of suffering, sin and death . . . in spite of the similarities there still exists an inferiority complex amongst the rural church . . . in many instances well-trained ministers who could make a tremendous impact in rural ministry renewal tend to gravitate to urban areas versus the rural for the simple reason that they usually view the urban as more aggressive and the path to importance . . . Thus, there usually exists a large vacuum of trained ministers who refuse to embrace the rigors and challenges of rural ministry, which in part contributes, to the lack of educational undergirding in the rural ministries . . . leaders in rural congregations also become careless due in part to poor training; as well as, a lack

³² Ibid., 167.

of interest in training servant leaders by those whose heart and soul is not grounded in rural ministry. That is, those leaders who aspire to be situated in urban ministries in many instances simply bide their time in the rural areas until the opportunity to move to a greener pasture avails itself to them.³³

This statement gives insight with respect to the plight of traditional rural infrastructure. The writer believes that in many instances the servant leaders of the deaconate, particularly in the rural context, fall victim to faulty understanding of their roles, due to lack of interest of the pastor whose heart is not aligned with the rural context as well as the absence of a training model to better empower and equip them for service.

The book, *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*, by Gilbert R. Rendle speaks on the subjects: leadership and change. It is obvious that when any church decides to embrace new ideas and mandates to be more effective in ministry there must be change. Servant leaders become both advocates as well as agents in the change process. They actually become the point of whatever process is about to take place. Rendle states,

Leaders of congregations today need to develop the calmness of spirit and the skills and tools that address the needs of the congregation in the midst of change. Often leaders will not be able to define clearly the end destination of the journey. William Bridges in his recent books *Transition* and *Managing Transitions* makes the point convincingly that managing change is not just about finding the new spot where you and your congregation are supposed to end up. Rather, it is often more critical to attend to understand the steps and stages of the transition period that will, in fact, get us to a destination.³⁴

³³ Herbert H. Wintermeyer, *Rural Worship* (Philadelphia, PA: The Christian Education Press, 1947), 34.

³⁴ Gilbert R. Rendle, *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders* (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1998), 2.

The book, *Turn Around Strategies for the Small Church* by Ron Crandall, addresses the subject of small rural churches stuck in the box. Crandall's assertions are quite helpful in framing this thought. He states,

Of America's 375,000 congregations, approximately two-thirds of all congregations average one hundred or fewer Sunday morning worshippers . . . the small church must have vitality. Vitality simply means to manifest life and have energy, or to be lively . . . a vital congregation is one that carries out the ministry of Jesus Christ by saying and doing what Jesus said and did. In other words, vital congregations have in them and manifest to the world the life of Jesus Christ . . . the small church may not know the degree to which they are deficient or how close they may be to becoming the norm of tradition whereby they may remain deficient and stagnant forever . . . That is, they have no sense of direction. Many things are prevalent amongst them, but that does not equal understanding . . . the organisms that look so simple are in fact exceedingly complex and therefore much mystery hangs in the balance as to the future of its plight . . . small rural churches deserve special study and their own prescription for renewed health . . . education in a systematic manner is an avenue to that horizon.³⁵

John Maxwell in his book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, presents a series of value-based leadership principles that are applicable to any organization or individuals seeking a more excellent way. His comments strengthen the idea of equipping through a knowledge-based learning process and suggest it results in empowerment.

For any organization or leader to be empowered, one must embrace an on-going pursuit of knowledge and understanding of that which one seeks to accomplish.³⁶

Maxwell explains that the value-based principles serve as a catalyst to a higher level of success. His chapter on "The Law of Empowerment" brings to the forefront the

³⁵ Ron Crandall, *Turn Around strategies for Small Churches* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 7,9.

³⁶ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1998), 37.

idea that any organization large or small can only attain success through a continuous learning and gaining of knowledge.³⁷

James Henry Harris, author of the book, *The Courage to Lead*, puts it rather succinctly regarding this subject of empowerment and the black church. Harris states in his chapter on “Leadership Matters in Church and Society” the following:

While the Black church is still the best thing African Americans have going for them in recent years, a generation of people has popped up among us who do not have a good foundation in the religious and cultural mooring of the church. This is also the case for some ministers and even pastors who have only recently been called to ministry after serving in other careers. This fact does not obviate the historical and socio-cultural reality that the church is still the most recursive incubator and facilitating center for the development of responsible African American leaders. This often begins in childhood, when time and time again one is called upon to recite a Bible verse or poem or participate in an Easter play or Christmas drama. Unfortunately, so many youth and children today have not had that experience. Many of our children are growing up outside of the walls of the church, unexposed to the values, teachings training, and experience that helped to shape our leaders in almost every phase and area of life. There is a need for a systematic evangelistic and educational effort to form in the people’s consciousness a sense of community and a sense of responsibility for the propagation of cultural experiences that are formed and shaped by the practice of religious.³⁸

Harris puts much emphasis on the need for systematic or on-going instruction that ultimately results in empowerment and growth. Moreover, when one ponders Harris’ statements regarding the plight of the congregation in general, it brings to the forefront the necessity of servant leaders being trained as much as possible so that they might more effectively meet those demands from that congregation. In addition, one might sense even stronger the need for meeting those demands with the heart of a true servant.

³⁷ Ibid., 38.

³⁸ Harris, *Courage to Lead*, 3.

Charles Foster in his book, *Educating Congregations*, asserts, “Two roles emerged from biblical witnesses. They are both visionary. One gathers up the teaching function of the prophet and the other the poet. Over and over again, the interplay of these two teaching roles emerged. One can find them in Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Psalmists, and the Minor Prophets.”³⁹ Note the words of Isaiah,

A voice cries out in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley
shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the
uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.
Then the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all the people
shall see it together.⁴⁰

Passages such as this, according to Foster, speak truths about our human condition and lift our spirits. The writer believes they bring hope within our communities. They were spoken of old and have been replicated down through the years through the efforts of many institutions striving to meet the mandates of servant leadership training.

³⁹ Charles R. Foster, *Educating Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 130.

⁴⁰ Isaiah 40:3-5

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical foundations of this project are aligned with the theoretical foundations of the “Collaborative Leadership” peer focus group. During the onset of the Doctoral Program at United Theological Seminary, Dr. Harold Hudson, utilizing the United Theological Seminary Brochure on Collaborative Leadership in the 21st Century, introduced the focus group to the focus area. The brochure states in part, “Collaborative Leadership is defined as allowing people to utilize their potential to create community through teamwork . . . methodology will be created that allow students to be creative and innovative in meeting the needs of the congregation and community through synergistic means. The students will develop a “Relational Collaborative model,” that will allow church leaders to work with other entities and social orders to meet the needs of the community.”¹ Dr. Harold A. Hudson, Focus Group Mentor, further explained that the group would work within this framework and individual objectives should affirm the beliefs and construct of the Collaborative Leadership Focus Group.²

With this construct in mind, the writer set out to design a ministry model that would truly create a synergy within the laity and Servant Leader Deaconate ranks of the Race Street Baptist Church. This model would entail collaboration between pastor and deacons, deacons and congregation and deacons in the community of faith.

¹ Brochure on Collaborative Leadership, United Theological Seminary, 2003.

Harris W. Lee in his book, *Effective Church Leadership*, sets the stage for this discussion through a quote from David P. Campbell on “the people who lead.” According to Lee, Campbell says, “Leadership has an elusive, mysterious quality about it. It is easy to recognize, difficult to practice, and almost impossible to create in others on demand. Perhaps no other topic has created as much attention from observers, participants and philosophers . . . with so little agreement as to the basic facts.”³

This quote speaks to the problem statement of this thesis, which in part is a lack of systematic servant leadership training within the organization. More importantly, however, it draws one into servant leadership dynamics whereby questions on this subject hang in the balance. Can laity and servant leader deacons be better equipped to embrace their roles within the deaconate? What are the necessary tools needed to prepare the laity for Servant Leadership? What are proven perspectives on Equipping, which would allow the deaconate to rise above the grain of tradition and better relate to the congregation? To address the problem statement of this thesis, this chapter will examine three major areas listed below.

First, the writer will formulate “Theological Foundations” consisting of his beliefs and those of the stakeholders regarding theological views of God. A brief methodical investigation will include insights from interpretations of the scriptural context and systematic study of scripture with respect to theological insights.

Second, “Biblical Foundations” will explore the ethos of the Old and New Testaments as it pertains to this ministry model. In addition to the biblical texts, research will include scholarly reviews of collaborative servant leadership whereby the laity are

² Harold A. Hudson, Mentor, Peer Group Seminar, January 2004.

³ Harris W. Lee, *Effective Church Leadership* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 85.

equipped for Kingdom work. This section will also include a segment on the Heart of the Servant Leader and those who serve.

Third, “Historical Foundations” will be analyzed as to the changing role of the rural Black Church with respect to collaborative leadership and its training edicts.

Finally, the writer will share scholarly views regarding the problem of the lack of an available collaborative servant leadership-training vehicle within the ranks of the deaconate. This will include insights regarding equipping the laity for servant leadership, general leadership principles for leaders, qualities of a deacon, and caring skills for deacons. These subjects will be examined through insights from the holy writ and also from the writings of scholars on the subjects.

Theological Foundations

The theological foundation of the context group in this ministry model is deeply rooted in the traditional conservative beliefs of the “True God” as set forth in the Hiscox Guide for Baptist Church under the New Hampshire Confession. It states, “We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressible glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.”⁴

The Stakeholders are all inhabitants of the rural context and have been associated with traditional rural ministry and culture down through the years. They perceive,

⁴ Edward T. Hiscox, *The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1990), 195.

understand and interpret reality through their religious culture and upbringing with beliefs that God informs and empowers his Shepherd, the pastor, with God-given authority. This would reflect Jeremiah 3:15 “I will give you pastors according to mine heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding . . .”⁵ These theological views suggest a conservative view with respect to leadership in general but a strong devout belief that God will take care of his people. However, the writer recognizes that he and the stakeholders are continually in search of truth of God through faith made known in Jesus Christ.

Daniel L Migliore in his book, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, gives a good foundation with respect to theological insights. Migliore states in chapter one, “The Task of Theology,” “The task of theology is a continuing search for the fullness of the truth of God made known in Jesus Christ . . . it emphasizes that theology is not mere repetition of traditional doctrine but a persistent search for the truth to which they point and which they only partially and brokenly express. As continuing inquiry, the spirit of theology is interrogative rather than doctrinaire; it presupposes a readiness to question and to be questioned. Like the search of a woman for a lost coin (Luke 15:8, the work of theology is strenuous but may bring great joy).”⁶

The writer will endeavor to lead the stakeholders to a broader view of truth through a collaborative effort in embracing their roles as servant leaders within the deaconate. This journey of learning will embrace the notion of being all they can be for

⁵ Frank Charles Thompson, *The Thompson Chain Bible* (Indianapolis, IN: B. B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc, 1988), 804.

⁶ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 1.

God who has ordained their roles as servant leaders to touch the masses in a most profound manner.

James H. Evans, Jr. writes in his book, *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology*, a segment on “The Idea of God” in chapter three Evans cites from a 1938 study by Benjamin Mays on “The Negro’s God.” This study examined in depth the idea of God in African-American experience. Mays sought to show how the idea of God is related to the social situation in which African-Americans found themselves. Evans states,

In the mass literature of the period from 1914 to 1937, other worldly, compensatory ideas of God were, as Mays observed, prevalent among African-Americans. God was seen as one who takes care of the unfortunate, providing shelter and substance. The collective experience of African-Americans during the period of mass migration to the Northern cities, the subsequent disillusionment with the urban promise, and the resultant anomie of ghetto life are part of the explanation for the emergence of otherworldly ideas of God. However, in this instance, the idea of God seems to be disengaged from the struggle for freedom, Mays notes that theses ideas of God . . . Savor of the belief that although times are hard God will take care of us. In some way, God will supply the food and shelter. Man’s task is to praise Him. These ideas tend to encourage people to take a laissez-faire attitude toward their poverty.⁷

The writer agrees with Evans concerning Mays’ assessment of the African-American’s idea of God during the era stated which encompasses the era of this writer and stakeholders participating in this project. The participants’ views are strongly rooted in such beliefs that *God will make a way somehow and take care of His people*.

Evans writes another segment in chapter three on “God, Freedom and Impartiality.” This quote is also helpful in framing the views of the stakeholders in this ministry model. Evans states that,

⁷ James H. Evans, Jr., *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 60.

African-American Christians have experienced God as an impartial judge of human character and motives. One of the major affirmations of God in the African-American Christian community is that “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34). The importance of this affirmation of the character of God becomes clear when set in its historical and political context. Black Christians claimed that God is impartial because they lived in a society in which European-American claimed the divine right of race, denied the humanity of African-Americans, and decided who would receive the benefits of that society based solely on the color of one’s skin.⁸

The stakeholders as well as the writer have also experienced such racial degradation down through the years in the rural context in which they reside and can fully appreciate the author’s ideology. Moreover, it makes the reality and belief of God as no respecter of persons a clear reality.

From a Christology perspective, the writer would also offer a brief theological view of himself and the stakeholders. That is, Jesus Christ as “Good News.” This view presupposes several things with respect to this collaborative leadership model. The writer believes it actually allows the stakeholders as servant leaders to be the catalyst for that which is good from God through His Son Jesus Christ as they carry out their roles. A good reference point here also is Frank A. Thomas in his book, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin’ God*. In Chapter One, Thomas writes a segment on “Jesus: The Good News.” Thomas states and the writer agrees that, “The New Testament good news is that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, the dominion of God met and conquered the dominion of Satan, whereupon salvation was made available to all . . . If we accept, through faith, the victory established by the savior, then we are delivered, preserved,

⁸ Ibid., 67.

made safe from the dominion of death. The good news is that God through Jesus Christ has forever defeated Satan, evil, and death in all of its forms and manifestations.”⁹

The writer sees this view as a prime opportunity through this collaborative effort for the stakeholders to demonstrate the good news as servant leaders standing as the first link of assistance between the congregation and pastor. Empowered with the belief of Good News, the participants constantly seek compassion and humility to carry out the mandate of their office and touch the lives of the masses.

The writer concludes with views that can be categorized as “Liberation Theology.” James Harris in his book, *Pastoral Theology: A Black-Church Perspective*, sheds light when he states,

Pastoral theology is a liberation theology because it is grounded in praxis. Its focus is comprehensive and specific. It deals with developing and implementing policies and programs in the church and community that convey the meaning of Christianity in practical life situations. It is the understanding of God and the world that governs the life and work of the pastor, servant leaders and parishioners . . . It requires an inordinate amount of love and sacrifices because the work of the pastor is often thankless and extremely demanding . . . It is also a constant struggle that involves motivation, change, continuity, teaching, counseling, management and a host of other skills . . . ¹⁰

The term “praxis” referred to by Harris is described by *Webster New Riverside University Dictionary* as “practical application or exercise of a branch of learning; 2. Habitual or established practice: Custom.”¹¹ The writer contends that this custom or

⁹ Frank A. Thomas, *They Like To Never Quit Praisin' God* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1997), 19.

¹⁰ James H. Harris, *Pastoral Theology: A Black-Church Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), ix.

¹¹ *Webster II New Riverside University Dictionary* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), 924.

practice is equivalent to the grain of tradition in the black rural church, which is referred to occasionally in this ministry model.

H. Wayne House in his book *Charts of Christian Theology & Doctrine* also offers helpful insights on Liberation Theology.

This type of theology is not seen exclusively as a system of dogmas but rather as a way to initiate social change. This view has been called the “liberation of theology” (H. Segundo). This theology grew out of Vatican II and the liberal theologian’s attempts to wrestle with social, political, and economic inequities in the face of a Christianity no longer based on a biblical worldview . . . Rather than a classical theology concerned with such theological matters as the nature of God, man, or the future, liberation theology is concerned with this world and how changes may occur through political action and also becomes the answer to the oppression of the poor.¹²

Thus, the writer sees Harris and House’s views as applicable to the deaconate servant leader as much as the role of pastor. The writer contends that this assessment of liberation theology helps provide the birthing chamber for the passion for which the servant leaders will embrace their roles and the message they will affirm as they endeavor to touch the lives of congregants. It is the writer’s belief that the participants will see themselves and those they serve within the scope of the context described by Harris and House. The writer believes that it will be those types of beliefs that give them the blessed hope of victory in any challenging situation in which they might find themselves.

A group lecture session with Dr. Andrew Sung Park during the Intensive Week in August 2004 is worth mentioning at this point. Dr. Park lectured on “Theological Methodology.” Dr. Park cited Liberation Theology as “Orthopraxis.” Park stated that “Orthopraxis” poses the question of: Human Socio-Economic context and the answer as:

¹² H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology & Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 11.

Commitment to the poor (the first act), and Theological reflections (the second act).¹³ Park also cited Juan Segundo's "Hermeneutics of Suspicion," which he coined as "Our experience—unmasks reality—new insight from the Bible—going back to our own situation with the Bible and seeing it all in a new way."¹⁴ The writer embraces the ideology of Dr. Park's lectures with respect to the aforementioned theological insights. Moreover, the writer believes that it is this theological insight that undergirds this collaborative model with writer and stakeholders sharing the same traditional theological views.

It is evident that the writer and stakeholders of this ministry model share the same social, economic and political views from a theological perspective. That perspective is born and formulated among the poor masses and also undergirded by "Faith in God." This premise of "Faith in God" serves as a catalyst to overcome struggles and ultimately rise above the everyday obstacles that stand as barriers to freedom. Dwight Hopkins in his book, *Shoes That Fit Our Feet*, makes comments that are helpful at this point. Hopkins states that,

African Americans are a religious people on the road to freedom. It has always been that way. In fact, the one thing that Africans and African Americans possess and owned in the New World was the history, memory, and practice of faith. For black folk since slavery, the church and other freedom faith gatherings have served many different functions; the African American God never left the poor alone at any time along the way. The church and religion pervaded and acted as the context for total black life . . . And so to discover what black people think about God, we travel a road where all African Americans live a faith of freedom.¹⁵

¹³ Andrew Park Sung, Professor, United Theological Seminary, Lecture: "Theological Methodology," Intensive Week August 2004.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dwight N. Hopkins, *Shoes that Fit our Feet: Sources for a Constructive Black Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 1.

Moreover, Hopkins writes in chapter 5 on *The Faith of Black Leadership: The Church and Religion*, “We have looked at the political economy and social relations views of Malcolm’s and Martin’s vision for the future. However, we must not forget the basis of their social vision. Both men grounded their predictions for, faith in, and vision of a new society on the church and religion, in a God who would see them through to the end.”¹⁶

These thoughts by Hopkins coupled with insights from the other authors bring full circle the theological views of the stakeholders of this ministry model in that they too view humanity with that kind of faith in God. The writer believes that it will be this kind of undergirding that sustains the collaborative equipping endeavor and accomplishes its goals.

Biblical Foundations

Old Testament Foundations

And it came to pass in the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the King, that wine was before him and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the King said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick: this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid. And said unto the king, Let the King live for ever; why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchers, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the King said unto me, for what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the King, If it please the King, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my father’ sepulchers, that I may build it . . . so it pleased the King to send me; and I set him a time. (Nehemiah 2: 1-5 KJV)

¹⁶ Ibid., 201.

The above text reveals the servant leader Nehemiah's leadership qualities and principles. The account of this Servant Leader Equipper is the Old Testament foundation of this ministry model. It will be unveiled by gleaning applicable collaborative leadership insights from Nehemiah, chapters two through six, which depict Nehemiah as servant leader equipper.

This section will explore the inherent qualities and principles of leadership in the text. A systematic view of Nehemiah's spirituality, faith, and devotion to God, organizational skills, and intestinal fortitude will be realized. Moreover, Nehemiah's selection of the right people for the right tasks and his influence in gathering the people for the important task of rebuilding will be brought to the forefront. The leader's strength in facing opposition and conflict will be explored and, finally, the success yielded by Nehemiah's leadership ability and faith in God will be examined.

Richard H. Seume in his book *Nehemiah: God's Builder* reveals the plight and faith of the servant leader Nehemiah. Seume says,

He was in the fortress in the palace or better, the fortress in Susa, the winter retreat of the Persian Monarchs. While in captivity, Nehemiah rose to the position of eminence in the Persian court as the King's cupbearer . . . Thus, this remarkable man came into a position of influence where his latent gifts could be developed and honed for later use . . . cupbearer was not one of political rank. Nehemiah was not a minister of state like Joseph or Daniel, but as a court servant, he did hold a place of special privilege and responsibility. The cupbearer, in at least one way, was the protector of his sovereign. He was required to taste the royal wine before it was given to the king lest some treacherous enemy should poison the monarch. In this way, cupbearers became royal favorites . . . He was a man of profound piety and related everything whether large or small to the desire to do the will of God, in whose presence he lived and moved. This is attested more than once by the interjectional prayers, which appear throughout the book. Moreover, one can see the man Nehemiah is inseparably welded to his ministry. We must not fail to see that God works his plan by working his people. That principle remains today . . . The

world has yet to see what God can do with and through and in a man who is fully consecrated to him.¹⁷

J. Oswald Sanders in his book, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*, sets forth a portrait of Nehemiah's prayer life, which was so essential to the success of his servant leadership. He states, "Prayer was an ordinary part of living and working. Prayer was his first reaction on hearing the plight of emigrants in Jerusalem. He was no stranger at the throne of Grace" (Nehemiah 1:4, 6, 2:4).¹⁸

Seume also suggests, "Nehemiah's prayer lifted the whole matter into a much higher meaning and interest . . . Nehemiah's prayer provides insight into the reason for Israel's calamities and into the relation of Jehovah to these calamities . . . When he described his interview with the King, he said, 'So I prayed to the God of heaven' (3:4) . . . More importantly, Nehemiah affirmed at the outset the majesty of God. This was something devout Jews treasured; they never permitted their devotions to slip into familiarity."¹⁹

Moreover, Nehemiah's spirituality, sincere love of his people, personal burden, and devotion to God gained favor with the pagan King, which sets the stage for his return to lead the task of rebuilding the walls of his homeland, Jerusalem.

Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers; sepulchers, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? (Nehemiah 2:3)

Seume is also helpful in framing this section. He states, "Nehemiah was plainly a man with a burden . . . I believe it can be said that the burden constitutes a man's warrant

¹⁷ Richard H. Seume, *Nehemiah: God's Builder* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1978), 13,19,20.

¹⁸ J. Oswald Saunders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for every Believer* (Chicago, IL: The Moody Bible Institute, 1994), 164.

¹⁹ Seume, *Nehemiah*, 25.

for preaching or serving the Lord in any capacity . . . Nehemiah had a burden . . . He could honestly say, ‘with my burden, I began.’”²⁰

And I said unto the King, If it please the King, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchers, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him.) For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return. So it pleased the King to send me; and I set him a time . . . And the King granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. (Nehemiah 2:5:6-6,8)

This scriptural text is more evidence of Nehemiah’s spirituality and devotion to Almighty God. Sueme states, “The king was so thoroughly convinced of Nehemiah’s integrity that he granted him everything he requested, including royal authorization, a set time for the project, materials with which to build, safe conduct visas through unfriendly territory, and a personal letter of introduction to the governors west of the Euphrates river.”²¹

So I came to Jerusalem, and was three days. And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire . . . Then answered them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 2: 3, 11-13, 20) . . . Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the door of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel. And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri. (Nehemiah 3: 1,4ff) . . . So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. (Nehemiah 6: 15)

²⁰ Ibid., 24.

²¹ Ibid., 30.

These excerpts of scriptures from the book of Nehemiah depict the state of ruin, devastation, and despair of the city of Jerusalem. In particular, the walls that once provided a secure fortress for the city were now in total disarray. The enemy had desecrated the city entirely and the few inhabitants that remained were easy prey for the enemy. The walls were no longer the security showcases of the city. They were no longer able to perform the function for which they were originally designed—protection from the enemy. They were now broken and in dire need of repair in order to be restored to the state and perform the function for which they were intended. The walls had to be rebuilt. This was certainly no task for one person, but the right person could equip others to rise to the occasion and accomplish the task. It would take special leadership qualities to make this happen. It would take a leader with exceptional organizational skills and influence to accomplish the task of gathering the people and selecting the right people for the right task in this mammoth rebuilding process.

John White, in his book *Excellence In Leadership*, speaks to the action oriented servant leader Nehemiah and his organizational skills. He states in the chapter “Leader and Organization” that, “Nehemiah is a man of action. Once he gets approval for his plan from the king, we see him negotiate for supplies, arrange for safe passage, do advance planning, mobilize a large work force and divide a massive public works project into manageable units . . . for now we see an efficient manager hard at work.”²²

Ralph G. Turnbull’s book *The Book of Nehemiah* allows further discoveries in this biblical text with respect to Nehemiah’s leadership actions. Turnbull speaks particularly to the gathering of the workers and those selected for the rebuilding process. Turnbull says, “The work of God in this instance was not carried out single-handed.

²² John White, *Excellence In Leadership: Reaching Goals with Prayer, Courage and Determination* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 35.

There is a roster or honor roll of like-minded people who joined Nehemiah when the task began. His dedication and spirit was contagious and others soon rallied around to help. The report of Nehemiah stressed, ‘WE build’ implying the plural of many people and not an editorial ‘we.’”²³

John G. Butler, in his book *Nehemiah: The Wall Builder*, is helpful to further this point. He sets forth the collaborative appeal to the people by Nehemiah a little differently than Turnbull. He states, “Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire; come, and let us built up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach (2:17).”²⁴ This undoubtedly was done through a prayerful dialogue with those that would embrace the kingdom work of God. Also, Derek Kidner in his book *Ezra and Nehemiah* states that, “the term ‘repaired’ is a Hebrew verb term meaning to ‘*make firm or strong*’. It does not mean restoring everything as before.”²⁵

Correspondingly, one can envision that within the body and ministry of the church there is much broken, torn, in disarray, and in need of repair similar to the walls of Jerusalem. It is imperative that the message be conveyed to those who will bear the task of helping to make whole again that which needs restoring or that which is lacking. Moreover, it is not only equally important that the plight of the people is conveyed but also that servant leaders be equipped to help make strong that which is weakened. Thus, one can see that the scriptures from Nehemiah provide relevant insights for the pastor to

²³ Ralph G. Turnbull, *The Book of Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1968), 27.

²⁴ John G. Butler, *Nehemiah: The Wall Builder* (Clinton, IA: LBC Publications, 1998), 59.

²⁵ Derek Kidner, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (Cambridge, MA: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 87.

become the equipping agent to equip, train, and empower the laity for the duties of servant leadership.

Specifically, it is stated in the book of Nehemiah, chapters two and three, that many people were involved in the building process. Also, it is noted in chapter three that the workers were of diverse backgrounds. There were goldsmith, district rulers, half district rulers, priest, guards, merchants and many who were simply called “the sons of.” Nehemiah actually took laity and equipped them for the work of rebuilding. Bear in mind that the wall had been in disarray and the city in rubble for eight years before Nehemiah’s return. However, through the leadership of Nehemiah, the wall was repaired in fifty-two days. It was all due to the leadership of Nehemiah. The writer submits that Nehemiah developed a collaborative leadership process by developing others to carry on the work.

Turnbull makes more observations that corroborates these assertions regarding the people selected for the task. He captures Nehemiah’s cooperation with and influence upon others. He states,

Nehemiah reported later, “So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I, and some few men with me.” Every movement inspired by the Holy Spirit has small beginnings. This was no exception. The church begun by our Lord had only twelve young men as the nucleus of that great host ever expanding in our day . . . Nehemiah not only shared with others in Jerusalem about the task, but he reminded them that “the hand of my God was upon me” He also challenged them to aid him and share with him, and said, “Let us rise up and build.”²⁶

Moreover, Turnbull expounds upon the actual participants in a section entitled “Who should work.” He states,

Everyone without exception, we say. Certainly all classes; all occupations; all ages; young and old; men and women. One spirit characterized these people. They knew themselves to be a remnant

²⁶ Turnbull, *Book of Nehemiah*, 28.

but also people of the Covenant. They had spiritual insight to see the possibilities. Aliens were not asked to share in this. The principle is sound that only those who are committed to the Covenant are first choice for work. Not that God cannot or will not use others and other instruments for his glory . . . but it pleases God to choose his workers in his sovereign manner. The men and the women of the Spirit are the best workers. Pascal said, “That natural things must be known to be loved, but divine things must be loved in order to be known.” The spiritually minded are the fit workers.²⁷

Turnbull also cites the fact that Nehemiah placed people best fitted for the tasks but also where needed the most. He asserts in a section “Where they worked” that,

Nehemiah was not at a loss for a place to begin. The need was wide-spread and total in demand. It was urgent. The work began near the Temple area, at the Sheep Gate. Work for God must have a center and a beginning. Then work proceeds from that point. Thus, they gradually spread out to other parts. Later the early Christians had this plan as ordered by the Lord, “beginning at Jerusalem. . . then out to the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It is significant that Nehemiah related his work to the Temple area. The spiritual is prior to the material. When work for God is thus connected progress is assured. First things first. “First the Kingdom!: Everyone can find some work to do and the wall is great and the task is long.”²⁸

Those involved in kingdom building soon realize that seldom is progress made and the victory won without opposition and conflict from outside and even within one’s own ranks. This was certainly true in the case of the servant leader Nehemiah in the midst of the rebuilding process.

Now there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live. Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. . . . We have borrowed money for the King’s tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children:

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 33.

and lo we bring our bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants . . . (Nehemiah 5:1-5) Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had builded the wall . . . that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you: Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner. (Nehemiah 6:1-4)

John White provides exegetical insights into the servant leader's endurance and intestinal fortitude in the midst of internal and external opposition. White says,

Whenever you move forward for God among God's own people, some insiders are not going to like it. From their viewpoint your forward move is a backward step for them. The opposition from within may differ in some respects from outside opposition, but it can be just as relentless. It is the enemy's fifth column. The Israelites killed Israel's prophets. Church leaders and their followers have persecuted evangelists and reformers and sought to suppress revival. The resistance from within may be active and belligerent or passive and sneaky. . . . No test of leadership is more revealing than the test of opposition. Christian leaders can go to pieces under such pressure. Some grow too discouraged to continue. Other build walls around themselves and shoot murderously from behind them they become embattled, embittered and vindictive. Not so with Nehemiah. No where does this leadership shine more brilliantly than in his handling of opposition. . . . It arose from a variety of sources, Sanballat, governor of Samaria, represented peoples resettled in areas north of Jerusalem under previous administrative policies. Additionally, there were ancient foes of Israel: Arabs, Ammonites, Ashdodites. Some Jews had marriage and trade alliances with them so that their interest lay with Nehemiah's enemies . . . Remember opposition came early . . . he never stopped building his wall. . . . When you are opposed, remember the words and examples of Nehemiah, You have been called to a work. Your business is to get on with it with all the strength as your disposal and not to let yourself be sidetracked.²⁹

G. Coleman Luck in the conclusion of his commentary on the books of *Ezra and Nehemiah* quotes from G. Morgan Campbell. He says,

²⁹ White, *Excellence in Leadership*, 66,79.

The man who sets himself to seek, to do, to teach the law of God invariably brings himself to where sorrow will be his portion and intrepid courage his only strength. If such devotion issue in such experiences, it also is the secret of strength, enabling a man to stand for God, and realize his purpose; and thus moreover, to be the true friend and deliverer of the people of God.³⁰

J. Oswald Sanders sums up the entire matter in his book, *Spiritual Leadership*. “The test of spiritual leadership is the achievement of its objective.” In Nehemiah’s case, the record is clear: “So the wall was completed (6:15).”³¹

In conclusion, the primary warrant of this Old Testament foundation revolves around the premise that God ordains collaborative leadership through the equipping of those for kingdom work. This is particularly evident in the analysis of selected texts from the book of Nehemiah, which provides examples of God’s Prophet equipping, empowering and training laity to better enable them to touch the lives of God’s people. It is the writer’s position that servant leadership equipping starts within the very first rank of laity and progressively moves unilaterally throughout biblical-based offices of leadership.

New Testament Foundations

From the New Testament perspective, this ministry model is grounded in Matthew Chapter 5, which captures the essence of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. The writer believes that this passage undergirds the proposed ministry model in that it is collaborative leadership in the truest sense. The Shepherd was not only in collaboration with his disciples, but he simultaneously equipped and empowered them for kingdom work. It depicts Jesus Christ as the Master Equipper. This model sets forth the Pastor of

³⁰ G. Coleman Luck, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1961), 69.

³¹ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 166.

Race Street Baptist Church in collaboration with laity and servant leaders and endeavoring to better equip them for defined roles in ministry.

Jesus the Master Equipping Servant Leader

Matthew 5: 1, 2 states, “And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, ...”

A brief exegesis of the term “taught” is helpful at this point. *Strong’s Complete Dictionary of Bible Words* sets the context in which this term is used. It notes several translations from the Greek. The term *didaktos* is from the root *didasko* meaning instructed; or communicated by teaching.³² However, Strong cites another translation, which narrows the focus and which even better addresses the ministry model. Strong gives another translation from the Greek as *didaskalos* meaning an instructor or doctor, master, teacher.³³

Fredrick Dale Bruner, in his book *The Christbook: A Historical/Theological Commentary*, states the following: “Teaching as we have seen, has as its special object what we today call ethics, and what Jesus called ‘the will of my Father in heaven.’ Teaching focuses on what people are to do. But it is impossible to describe Jesus’ teaching as merely ethical in the ordinary sense, for Jesus saw right human doing as the divinely enabled response brought by the in breaking divine kingdom.”³⁴

³² James Strong, *The New Strong’s Complete Dictionary of Bible Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 603.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Christbook: A Historical/Theological Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publishers, 1987), 134.

David Buttrick, in his book *Speaking Jesus: Homiletic Theology and The Sermon on the Mount*, is very helpful at this juncture in furthering the idea of Jesus' teaching of his disciples. With regard to verse one, Buttrick says,

Some interpreters have argued that the Sermon on the Mount is an ethic for disciples, a churchly ethic for committed believers, but not for a wider world. Matthew seems to have arranged the audience in two circles, with the disciples gathered close to Jesus and then a crowd around them . . . Matthew is matching the pattern of Moses in Exodus 19:7: "So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all as one: 'Everything the Lord has spoken we will do.'" . . . If Jesus is portrayed as a Moses-like teacher bring God's word to the world, what is Matthew trying to tell us? . . . Just as Moses was the bearer of God's word to Israel, so Jesus also is the bearer of God's kingdom-word to Israel and a wider world. Jesus is the teacher and in continuity with Moses and, if anything interprets and intensifies God's law and teaching through his disciples.³⁵

R. T. France, in *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Commentary*, speaks to the essence of the teaching and captures the interpretation and meaning of the beatitudes. He states, " 'Blessed' is a misleading translation of *makarios*, which does not denote one whom God blesses, but represents the Hebrew 'asre, 'fortunate', and is used almost entirely in the formal setting of a beatitude. It introduces someone who is to be congratulated, someone whose place in life is an enviable one. The beatitudes thus outline the attitudes of the true disciple, the one who has accepted the demands of God's kingdom, in contrast with the attitudes of the 'man of the world'."³⁶

Michael H. Crosby solidifies this point in his book *Spirituality of the Beatitudes*. He says in his chapter "Coming under a Higher Power, Committing to a Nobler Rule" that, "The process of entering God's reign will be impossible unless we go through each

³⁵ David Buttrick, *Speaking Jesus: Homiletic Theology and The Sermon on the Mount* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 56.

³⁶ R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 108,109.

step of conversion from those forces that reign over us, our groups, our political economy, and our church. The process begins with seeking and finding, experiencing the living God in such a powerful way that God's authority is desired above all. Once embraced, God Trinitarian rule demands a reversal of any thinking or acting that does not reflect God's purposes."³⁷

Thus, one can see that Jesus purposely and intentionally trained his disciples to touch the lives of the masses. According to the aforementioned assertion by Crosby, it helps one to understand that the teaching must be such that not only prepares one for the kingdom but helps others in the kingdom journey as well.

Jesus also taught in a manner which included the qualities of humility and compassion; thus setting the stage for enhancing the role of servant leader. Undoubtedly, this teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ embraces every conceivable role that the disciples would ultimately encounter, such as, being equipped with servant leadership principles, serving in the time of crisis and serving in kingdom building. Moreover, woven into the very fabric of the discharge of their duties are the desirable qualities of compassion and humility. In chapter 5 verses 14–16, Jesus states,

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted: it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; nor it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14–16)

George Montague in his book *Companion God: A Cross Cultural Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, shares insights from the text, which undergird the model. He states,

³⁷ Michael H. Crosby, *The Spirituality of the Beatitudes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 36.

Between Jesus and the crowds are the disciples. They leave the crowd and come to him. The disciples differ from the masses in their commitment to the person of Jesus. They are willing to be publicly identified as his. They ‘cross the line’ by a decision which will prove costly. Thus, in this scene, often repeated no doubt in Jesus’ public ministry, Matthew sees a model for the church of his day. The church is the gathering of Jesus’ disciples from the masses to be taught by him in the sight of the masses.³⁸

Correspondingly, this model depicts the deacons being drawn from the ranks of laity and set aside for training and teaching within the faith community of the church.

John Maxwell in his book, *“The Maxwell Leadership Bible,”* is very helpful at this point. He reflects on the Matthew account of the Sermon on the Mount. “Followers of God are to be leaders of Men and live at a higher level.”³⁹ Moreover, Maxwell states, “Emerging leaders discover their strengths and weaknesses in reaching their potential through a preparation phase.”⁴⁰

Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount uses a series of metaphors using images of salt and light to emphasize His teaching points. It also sets the stage for the instruction and training of servant leaders through this training session of his disciples. It is apparent from Jesus’ ministry that the essence of a servant’s heart is woven into the very fabric of these similitudes, which undergirds the office of the servant leader. The Lord Jesus Christ best demonstrates the application of the servant leader’s task. Keep in mind that that which Jesus does, he does so well. He always operates in the realm of the spiritual. The gospels depict Jesus as a man full of compassion and humility. The gospels bring alive the Master Servant Leader serving in many capacities. In all that Jesus did, the Servant’s

³⁸ George T. Mongague, *Companion God: A Cross-Cultural Commentary of the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 47.

³⁹ John C. Maxwell, *Maxwell Leadership Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2002), 1155.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1055.

heart was always at the forefront. However, it is His collaborative endeavors of training laity (his disciples) for servant leadership that comes to the forefront and undergirds this model.

Therefore, when one is engaged in the work of ministry as a servant leader, one not only is mandated to fulfill general leadership obligations of the office, but also one should be equipped and enabled to embrace ministry tasks with the heart of the Master Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. This enables the servant leader to meet the needs of ministry and congregation. The application of those mandates and principles set the stage for not only what one does, but also how they do it and the motivation for doing what they do.

Jesus and Collaborative Leadership

As the writer broadens this New Testament foundation perspective, it becomes apparent that the Lord Jesus Christ in all that he did in his earthly ministry was stimulated out of a compulsion to serve. Thus the concept of Servant Leadership is born out of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Luke's gospel is helpful in framing this thought,

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. (Luke 4:16–18)

One cannot overlook the fact that the proclamation of humility and compassion of the Master Equipper and Servant Leader, Jesus Christ, found its genesis in Old Testament prophecies. These prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Below are just a few examples from the Old Testament of prophetic proclamations of the coming of the Master Equipping Servant Jesus to equip laity for servant leadership.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. (Isa. 42:1-3)

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. (Ps. 40:8)

The Law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. (Ps. 37:31)

It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. (Isaiah 49:6)

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jer. 31:33)

Henri J. M. Nouwen in his book, *Out of Solitude*, shares insights on Jesus as Servant

Leader. He makes the following comments on Mark 1:32-39:

The more I read this nearly silent sentence locked in between the loud words of action, I have the sense that the secret of Jesus' ministry is hidden in that lonely place where he went to pray, early in the morning, long before dawn In the lonely place Jesus finds the courage to follow God's will and not his own; to do God's work and not his own It is in the lonely place, where Jesus enters into intimacy with the Father, that his ministry is born...the careful balances between silence and words, withdrawal and involvement, distance and closeness, solitude and community forms the basis of the Christian life.⁴¹

The Heart of the Equipped Servant Leader

Luke 22:26 states "Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the Leader as one who serves."

The capacity to truly serve one another is one of the most precious gifts one can possess. It creates unity within any body and especially the Body of Christ. The old saying, "where there is unity, there is strength" holds true. In John 13:13-15, Jesus said to Peter, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that he should do as I have done."

⁴¹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974), 15.

Elizabeth Connor, in her book, *Journey Inward, Journey Outward*, sets before the reader the importance of serving others as it relates to unity and one's identity with Christ. She asserts:

We forget, if we ever learned it, that our unity is in serving. There is no unity with Christ or his people unless we serve. This is why the exercising of gifts is important. It enables us to serve, to give of ourselves to another. This is how we find out what out what oneness in Christ is about. When you are moving out in faith to serve another, there comes an oneness within. It makes of your words unifying words and of your deed a unifying deed. There is no Christian community not rooted in service, and no Christian service not rooted in relationship.⁴²

Consequently, serving others is an essential quality for each person who is a part of the body of Christ. Walter Rauschenbush, a pioneer in the social gospel arena cites a definition of sin and salvation that the writer believes speaks to the “why” of serving others and is so important for persons engaged in servanthood. Rauschenbush contends that sin “consists of a selfish attitude whereby a person is the center of the universe, and God and all his fellowman are means to service his pleasure, his wealth and set off his egoism.”⁴³ Salvation for Rauschenbush is the turning point of one's attention toward God and humanity instead of self. He further asserts, “complete salvation consists of an attitude of love in which one would freely co-ordinate his life with the life of his fellows in obedience to the loving impulses of the spirit of God, thus taking his part in a divine organism of mutual service.”⁴⁴

⁴² Elizabeth O' Connor, *Journey Inward, Journey Outward* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1975), 40.

⁴³ Walter Rauschenbush, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1917), 97,98.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

John R. W. Stott also weighs in on this idea of serving others. He states in his book *Christian Mission*, that, “in salvation we are being delivered from the bondage of self-centeredness into liberty of service.”⁴⁵

The writer submits that when one ponders Rauschenbush’s definition of sin and salvation and Stott’s assertion regarding self-centeredness, serving others becomes visible evidence that one has received salvation. To sense that this virtue is woven into the fabric of the servant leader’s heart, brightens the hopes and confidence of those served by the servant leader. Thus, this model of collaborative leadership speaks loudly to the need for systematic leadership training of laity for leadership.

The writer also believes that there must be something beyond the obligatory mandates of one’s office and even one’s personal gifts that motivates one to serve others. There must be a compelling desire or what one might refer to as a passion or compulsion to serve. But how does one gain such a passion or compulsion to serve?

Martin Buber writes in his book *A Believing Humanism*, a chapter entitled “Comments on the Idea of Community” which is helpful in understanding this compulsion for service. He states,

Community is the inner constitution of a common life that knows and embraces the parsimonious “account,” the opposing “accident” the suddenly invading “care.” . . . community serves its master in the unselective, unexalted simple reality that it has not chosen for itself, that rather, just thus, has been sent . . . there is a hidden fact that community has a center . . . The real origin of community is undoubtedly only to be understood by the fact that its members have a common relationship to the center superior to all other relations.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1975), 106.

⁴⁶ Martin Buber, *A Believing Humanism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 89.

Buber has a unique and eloquent manner in framing his words to suggest that one's compulsion to serve another is the result of our relationship to the Eternal. This assertion supports the two greatest commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ, which causes us to ponder the possibility that our response to one another is heavily determined by our relationship to the Eternal.

Mark, the gospel writer, expounds upon this.

And one of the scribes came and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, which is the first commandment? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this; Thou shall love thy neighbor as thy self. There is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12: 28–31)

Gustavo Gutierrez in his book, *We Drink From Our Own Wells*, shares some insight on serving that is so essential to the role of the diaconate. He states, “We have come to understand that a true and full encounter with our neighbor requires that we first experience the gratuitousness of God’s love. Once we have experienced it, our approach to others is purified of any tendency or imposes an alien will on them; it is disinterested and respectful of their personalities, their needs and aspirations. The other is our way for reaching God, but our relationship with God is a precondition for encounter and true communion with the other.”⁴⁷

Thus, one's compulsion to serve is born out of our first objective in life and that is to love God. As a result of loving God, one comes to love others and oneself, and the compulsion to serve is born. The writer believes that Gutierrez's assertions are fully realized in the context of this ministry model.

⁴⁷Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Book, 1984), 112.

It also can be said that one's desire and motivation for serving others is also in part the result of time spent alone with the Eternal. Solitude in many instances paves the paths to decisions for the Servant Leader. Solitude is not a protection from the world's concern but rather a way to compassion. The scripture says of Jesus, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."⁴⁸

Servant Leaders Reaching New Heights through Collaborative Learning

Henry J. M. Nouwen in his book, *The Wounded Healer*, describes what he calls the predicament of nuclear man.

Nuclear man is a man who has lost naïve faith in the possibilities of technology and is painfully aware that the same powers that enable man to create new life styles carry the potential for self-destruction . . . realizes that his creative powers hold the potential for self-destruction. He sees that in this nuclear age vast new industrial complexes enable man to produce in one hour that which he labored over for years in the past, but he also realizes that these same industries have disturbed the ecological balance and, through air and noise pollution, have contaminated his own milieu. He drives in cars, listens to the radio and watches TV, but has lost his ability to understand the working of the instruments he uses. He sees such an abundance of material commodities around him that scarcity no longer motivates his life, but at the same time he is groping for a direction and asking for meaning and purpose.⁴⁹

Think for a moment on Nouwen's words and on the social-economic, psychological and the many other dynamics facing congregants in the church in this 21st century. While emphasis is placed upon the X-Generation and Prophetic proclamation for the challenges of the 21st Century Church, it appears that much emphasis is towards

⁴⁸ Mark 1:35

⁴⁹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1972), 5.

urban ministry and those who have progressed at a reasonable level along Christian educational lines and trained to some degree to meet the challenges. The writer submits that those same challenges loom within the rural ministry as well. It may not be at the same magnitude, but it requires the same level of expertise and zeal as does the urban ministry context. Therefore, the writer believes the servant leader in the rural context should be exposed to the highest level of preparatory training possible with respect to his or her office. It is this type of undergirding through collaborative endeavors in this model that the writer is striving to achieve.

Patricia Cranton furthers the thought of collaborative learning in her book *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers of Adults*. She states,

Most professionals are generally trained and educated in their various fields or occupations. There are always questions as to the quality and content of preparatory programs; nevertheless people do have the opportunity to learn about their profession. Following the initial training, most professionals are then encouraged to participate in professional development activities of one kind or another. In some professions, continuing education is voluntary; in others it is a requirement of maintaining certification. For most adult educators, none of this is so. They often need not have preparatory training and professional development offerings may not be available or appropriate. Thus, how do adult educators learn about their practice: How do they continue to grow and change over time?⁵⁰

Cranton's writing specifically refers to adult educators, but it is applicable to those in the servant leader's role. Certainly this is stated in a general context and suggests varying degrees of training and education. In many instances this concept of training and education plays out at both ends of the spectrum. Organizations with more structure are far more apt to require the rank and file to participate or undergo mandatory training,

⁵⁰ Patricia Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning New Perspectives for Teachers of Adults* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), xii.

which serves to enhance or better equip the organization in carrying out its mission. Obviously, there are many questions associated with quality and content of training requirements and equipping models. However, training is the norm that sets the standard for efficiency and mission success.⁵¹ The writer believes that Cranton's concept of leadership training also helps one to better understand the concepts of servant leader principles.

Historical Foundations

Sherman Tribble presented a lecture on "Historical Foundations for Doctor of Ministry Projects" on August 4, 2004 during Intensive Week at United Theological Seminary. Dr. Tribble started the lecture with a statement from his handout on the essence of historical foundations.

The discipline of history is a very valuable research tool for Doctor of Ministry scholars . . . research grows out of the context in which one ministers . . . and one must consider the forces that shape the context, the influences that offered their expertise, faith, and resources to the context, the time period that provided the birthing chamber for the context, the progression of the work, the theological/doctrinal issues that have historical ramifications as well as resources gained to support the context.⁵²

It is with this framework in mind that the writer will endeavor to set forth the following areas of historical insight that inform this ministry model. First, the writer will explore "Humble Beginnings in the Rural Church." This will expound upon portions of the origin of Race Street Baptist Church that were not discussed in Chapter One. Second, "Traditional Ministry Infrastructure" will view servant leadership in the small rural black

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Sherman R. Tribble, "Historical Foundations For Doctor of Ministry Projects," Lecture Handout (United Theological Seminary, August 4, 2004), 1.

Baptist church under the veil of challenges and struggles: economically, socially, and spiritually, while maintaining faith in God. Finally, “Striving for a more Excellent Way,” will set forth the church’s desire to be all it can be in kingdom building. This will address the problem statement of this ministry model and also include the need for providing a servant leadership-training resource that addresses the ever-evolving need to equip the laity for servant leadership and enhance the standard of ministry within its ranks.

Dr. Henry Mitchell in his book, *The Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years*, shares insights regarding important aspects of the history of the black church from its beginnings.

Traditional histories tend to focus on common trends of recording only such data as membership totals, buildings built or bought, mortgage burnings, and purchases of pews and organs. While examples of the early financial struggles of local churches are vital and require a rightful place in making history more concrete and personally relevant; the main data concern the ministries . . . Also, traditional histories tend to focus on organizational development, socio-economic analysis, external power issues, and great orator achiever heroes. These are all valid subjects and should be included . . . However; the local congregation’s internal structure and struggle into existence, the shape of ministry and ministerial leadership, and the dedicated effort of entire congregations should be of main concerns in the church history digest.⁵³

Mitchell’s assertions are helpful in framing this section in that the writer will focus on the latter, “ministry leadership” which concerns the plight of servant leadership within the black church.

Dr. Mitchell’s discussion of church history has already been captured in part in a previous chapter, which stated the following: Race Street Baptist Church found its beginning in 1894 on donated land and as a split from First Baptist church in Farmville, Virginia. The original church was named Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

⁵³ Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), x.

In this section, the writer gives a brief portrait of the internal struggles, shape of ministry and ministerial leadership mentioned by Mitchell as a major concern of the church's history. Mitchell also describes two types of churches. "A church of the masses and emergent middle class churches."⁵⁴

Race Street has traditionally been a church of the masses, that is, a ministry of traditional leadership, organizations and a congregation consisting of lower to middle income parishioners. Over the years, the ministry could be described as a "Moving" ministry or a "hot" church, where the general temperament of worship has been charismatic. In the line of eight preachers since its origin, the pastors have been known for rich vibrant preaching. However, it has been said that several could hardly read or write. Correspondingly, the ranks of servant leadership have been God-fearing men of great tradition. They were not men of strong educational background but devout men of faith. In general, one could say the leadership was very traditional of a hierarchal top-down, authoritative leadership style.

One of the major setbacks for the community and the church was the closing of the public schools due to racial desegregation from 1959 through 1964. This negatively impacted an entire generation of people from a social, economic, emotional and educational perspective. It affected Race Street Baptist Church and countless black churches in that region. Many from that generation were denied the opportunity to complete a high school education and compete for jobs and other life experience opportunities. This also affected negatively the ranks of leadership, particularly within the black churches. As pastor of Race Street for the past fourteen years, there has been a continuous challenge to assist in the healing process, which became an open and hidden

⁵⁴ Ibid.

hurt from that era. This played out in worship, relationships, and particularly within the ranks of servant leadership and those aspiring to the ranks of leadership.

The aforementioned situation actually brings the problem statement of this ministry model to the forefront. There is a lack of an available systematic servant leadership training resource that allows laity and the servant leader deaconate to gain a better understanding of their role, which could result in them being more effective in ministry. The writer is not saying that training is not available through various Baptist organizations and associations, but rather that there is not an available vehicle for training of laity and servant leaders as part of the church's ministry infrastructure. The writer believes that the equipping ministry model will provide the synergy and restoration needed for laity and servant leaders to be more effective in ministry.

As discussed earlier, the Old Testament undergirding of this ministry model is found in sections of chapters two through six of the book of Nehemiah. It depicts the state of ruin and despair of the city of Jerusalem. The walls were no longer able to perform the function for which they were designed. In essence, they were now dysfunctional. The walls were in need of repair to fulfill their purpose. Someone had to be properly equipped and knowledgeable of the skills necessary to deal with the condition of the walls.

If one were to view the above paragraph as a parable with spiritual insights, one could readily understand how applicable this is to the plight of the community and ministry of the church. Those within the church who are responsible for interfacing and ministering to the brokenness, the hurt, the pain, the scars, the ruined lives and those that need restoration are the servant leaders. The deaconate play a prominent role. In addition, how they go about those tasks and interface with congregants has a tremendous

impact on the ministry. It could be a positive or negative impact within the overall scheme of ministry.

Greg Ogden writes on *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*. His insights on ministry are helpful at this point in the discussion. He sets forth objectives with respect to the idea of equipping laity.

The first objective is to “mend and restore which means to fix what is broken” . . . Second he states, “to bring back into proper alignment” . . . This means that spiritual leaders who share oversight with pastor must be equipped in their role to protect the spiritual health of the body. This will require intervention into the lives where people, knowingly or unknowingly, live self-destructively . . . the third objective is to supply what is lacking.⁵⁵

Ogden’s insights describe the sensitive and important role of the deaconate. It equally holds true for laity aspiring to the ranks of servant leadership. This assertion also speaks loudly to the overall state of the ministry of the church and challenges the church to mandate equipping resources that will yield much fruit within the ministry through better understanding by servant leaders of role obligations. It points to a need for change and renewal in the rural church.

Harold E. Vann, II in *Bound For The Promised Land* helps one to better understand this situation. Vann speaks to the need for transformation and renewal among servant leaders in the rural church for new millennium ministries. He sets forth five practical ways the church can effectively minister its way into the 21st Century. These proposals grip the problem statement of this proposed model with respect to the traditions and practices of the rural church. The writer agrees with Vann’s assertions.

(1) Rural churches have to strip themselves of non-biblical traditions. Leave ignorance behind if we’re going to win this particular world for Christ; seek to answer the question of how

⁵⁵ Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 105, 106.

would Jesus Christ behave if he were physically present today?
The Churches' marching orders have already been given.
Therefore we do not need to try to (re) create order.

(2) The rural church has to debunk (expose as being false or exaggerated) biblical misconceptions.

(3) The rural church has to mentally disregard the fact of its rural existence that portends (means) it is apparently disconnected in some way from the urban or suburban areas where necessary resources might be.

(4) Churches in the rural area have to realize they, too, are significant in the body of Christ.

(5) Rural churches have to realize and understand their distinct resemblance to the Primitive Church of the New Testament. I suggest that Christians in rural areas should celebrate their ecclesiastical existence and seek to refocus their ministry toward those who are amongst them. Follow the ministry of Jesus.⁵⁶

The writer has personally observed, after serving as a Pastor for twenty-two years in a rural context, that most of the deaconate do not really have a strong grasp of basic leadership principles. Moreover, many are ill-equipped to embrace the role of servant leadership effectively. Therefore, it becomes a challenge to adequately meet the demands of serving as spiritual disciple; serving as counselor, ministering in a crisis and serving in Konionia. However, to the credit of the deaconate, they are faithful to their tasks and dutiful in their attendance. Yet too often they are apprehensive in embracing the stated areas with the confidence, zeal and compassion that would yield desired resolutions reflecting favorably on the overall ministry.

Howard B. Foshee writes in his book, *Now that You're a Deacon*, about Dr. John Tyndall, a renowned British scientist.

Someone asked Dr. Tyndall who had been of the greatest influence on his life. He answered quickly that the person of greatest

⁵⁶ Baptist General Convention of Virginia, *Bound For The Promised Land* (Richmond, VA: Baptist General Convention of Virginia, 2000), 68, 69.

influence had been an old friend who had lived with him through the years as a servant. Dr. Tyndall said, “Each morning my friend would knock on my bedroom door and call out: ‘It is 7:00, sir. Get up! You have great work to do today!’”

The same is true for you as a new deacon. You have great work to do today. I hope that you feel God’s energy flowing through you. My wish for you is that you experience a sense of divine purpose, as did Jesus when he said, “I must be about my Father’s business.” And feel the thrill of service as Paul when he said, “For this day was I born!” You can find no happier person than the individual who is busy for the Master, using his gifts in Christian service. One of nature’s masterpieces truly is the man absorbed in his work and loving every minute of it.

So much depends on you! Hurt abounds in this world and cries out for spiritual healing. Aching souls reach out for a caring, listening, compassionate friend . . . ⁵⁷

This statement resonates from the very spirit and fabric of this collaborative leadership ministry model. It sets the stage for the participants’ understanding of striving for a new level of dialogue and collaboration with laity and servant leaders in context and in the surrounding rural context as well. The writer asserts that, when there is collaborative leadership, there are untold opportunities to rise to another level in the body of Christ and reach new heights in Kingdom building endeavors.

In conclusion, the book, *We Have This Ministry*, by Samuel D. Proctor and Gardner C. Taylor is helpful in furthering the idea of the necessity of equipping servant leaders. It also serves as a good closing to this chapter. The authors state in chapter two, entitled “The Pastor as Teacher,” “Any portrait of the pastor must include the pastor as a teacher. It is striking how often Jesus functioned as a teacher. In Mark chapter six we read, ‘When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue; and the large congregation who heard him were amazed . . . ’ NEB). And again in Mark 10:1, ‘. . . he came into the regions of Judea and TransJordan; and when a crowd gathered around him

⁵⁷ Howard B. Foshee, *Now that You’re a Deacon* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1975), 9, 10.

once again, he followed his usual practice and taught them' (NEB). The title often ascribed to him was rabbi, 'teacher.'"⁵⁸

This not only reminds the pastor of his or her divine calling, but also points to their obligation to teach. This is particularly true of those who are the closest link to the congregation, which are the deacons as servant leaders. The writer finds himself at the very heart of this assertion endeavoring as a prime objective to equip through a collaborative process.

⁵⁸ Samuel D. Proctor and Gardner C. Taylor, *We Have This Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996), 13.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The title of this ministry model is “Equipping Laity for Servant Leadership: Modeling a Servant’s Heart, in the Small Rural Black Baptist Church.” The context selected for this project proposal was the deaconate ministry of the Race Street Baptist Church located in the township of Farmville, Virginia. This is a small rural black congregation. The stakeholders consisted of four incumbent deacons and three members of laity aspiring to the ranks of the deaconry.

The hypothesis of this ministry model reflects a lack of an available servant leadership training resource within the ministry’s infrastructure. The deaconate need a better understanding of their roles and the means to more effectively carry out their roles through interactions with congregants. The objective is to create a biblical-based servant leadership-training model to better equip and empower prospective laity and those within the ranks of the deaconate. The premise is that, by undergoing this servant leadership training, the participants would gain a better understanding of their role as deacons and be better equipped to carry out the duties of their office. It was believed that administering systematic leadership training that provided participants with new tools to embrace their roles would yield a heightened sense of empowerment. Moreover, this could strengthen the bond between deacons, congregation and pastor and have a positive effect on the overall ministry.

The servant leadership model consisted of ten modules on the following subjects:

- 1.) General leadership and servant leadership principles and concepts. 2.) The Origin of the Deacon. 3.) Requisites and Qualifications of a Deacon. 4.) Organization. 5.) The Deacons' Role in the Observance of the Ordinances. 6.) The Deacons' Role in the Worship Services. 7.) The Deacons' Role in Ministering to Members. 8.) Deacons Serving in the Time of Crisis. 9.) Relationships 10.) Training Requirements to become a Deacon.

Each participant was provided with a personal training manual with extra workspace for note-taking and personal comments.

The Planning Process

During the initial planning stage, the writer identified professional sources regarding utilization of questionnaires and their format in an effort to design the best training model and process possible. Information contained in the book, *You and Your Action Research Project* by Jean McNiff, Pameal Lomax, and Jack Whitehead, was quite helpful in the initial process. The authors cited a number of necessary steps in building and administering questionnaires.

- Decide what information you need to find. Construct your questionnaires or use one that has already been piloted. Put the instructions for completing the questionnaire at the top of the paper.
- Have a clear policy for dealing with confidentiality and share this with your respondents.
- Pay attention to detail, content and appearance.
- Pilot the questionnaire. Try it out on a few people, and invite their criticism. Try and analyze the responses to see if it is giving you the sort of data you want.¹

¹ Jean McNiff, Pameal Lomax, and Jack Whitehead, *You and Your Action Research Project* (New York: Hyde Publications, 1996), 100.

The writer found that employing these steps was very helpful in the design of content of the questions for the pre and posttest. The process began as follows:

First, A letter was sent to the Contextual Associates followed by a meeting, which outlined the project and solicited their help in administering the project. This was followed by a planning calendar for the administration of the project, which was to commence March 17, 2005 and continue through May 2005 with any necessary follow-up sessions scheduled for June.

Second, the writer held an orientation meeting with the stakeholders, which consisted of explaining the objectives of the project and the impending training process. Emphasis was placed on confidentiality. A protocol consent form was given to each participant and it was explained that they had the option to opt out of the project prior to its conclusion. This form is found in Appendix B.

Third, the Pretest Questionnaire becomes the cornerstone of the qualitative research method. The questions measured whether stakeholders viewed servant leadership as authority to invoke action by others or the influence to invoke actions by others. Other questions covered the following: duties of deaconate in worship, scriptural based questions of the qualifications of a deacon, and the temperament of a deacon in carrying out the duties of the office. Pre and posttest questions were the same and are shown in Appendix E.

Fourth, a *Leadership Self-Assessment Tool* was administered allowing participants to do self-assessment of their perceived individual leadership ability with regard to a measurable scale. This is shown in Appendix D.

Fifth, a *Posttest Questionnaire* was administered as a follow-up tool to the ten-module-training program undertaken by the participants. The posttest questionnaire was the same as the pretest. These questions are shown in Appendix E.

Research Design, Measurement and Instrumentation

The writer sought scholarly viewpoints regarding the type of research design that should be employed in such a ministry model. Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin in their book, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*, provided a good start through an explanation of Action Research, which serves as a good basis of understanding. The definition states, “Action Research (AR) is social research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and members of an organization or community seeking to improve their situation. AR promotes broad participation in the research process and supports action leading to a more just or satisfying situation for the stakeholders.”²

Greenwood and Levin also provided insights on qualitative versus quantitative research methodology involving the AR process.

We also have noticed a tendency for people to believe that AR must be qualitative research rather than quantitative research. This unjustifiable assumption probably arises from the belief that action-oriented work cannot be scientific (precisely because it involves action) and the additional assumption (erroneous in our view) that quantitative research must be more scientific than qualitative research. Because we see no merit to these assumptions, we reject the notion that AR is qualitative research only.³

² Davydd J. Greenwood, Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research; Social Research for Social Change* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc., 1998), 4.

³ Ibid., 6-7.

Comments by John W. Creswell in his book, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* were also helpful. This book informed the writer concerning mixed methods of research design. Creswell states in part, “. . . integrated use of methods exists. Also the mixed methods may have several purposes: triangulation, elaborating on results, using one method to inform another, discovering paradox or contradiction and extending the breadth of the inquiry.”⁴

The insights gained from Creswell’s comments suggested that either qualitative or quantitative research could be utilized in this project. Also, the writer understood that mixed methodologies include multiple investigative sources to confirm findings, which was not necessary in this ministry model. After reviewing the variety of methodologies, the writer chose the qualitative methodology within the framework of Action Research.

The biblical-based knowledge of collaborative servant leadership within the ranks of the deaconate established a base of knowledge concerning the ministry model. The research design also provided the researcher with the freedom to include the participants in the context in a self-evaluating process and the opportunity for intermittent feedback during the conclusion of the training modules. The writer allotted a period called “Express your Feelings” during each training session. This was in addition to the on-going discussions during various topics.

In light of this methodology being broader in scope, open to discovery, interpretative, participatory, and taking place in context rather than a controlled environment, the researcher was confident that the utilization of this approach was appropriate for the research design of this particular collaborative leadership project.

⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 183.

Ministry Model Implementation

The author designed a survey of twelve questions that reflected knowledge from the modules listed in the bullets of paragraph three above. Overall, the questionnaire captured the essence of the objectives of the Leadership training modules.

The participants completed the questionnaires and the completion of the leadership self-assessment instrument followed. The initial feedback from the participants was that they were eager to get started with the leadership training, which they indicated was long overdue and much needed.

The above concluded the research design, measurement and instrumentation of the ministry model. The actual implementation of the model and its results are discussed in Chapter Five, Field Experience.

The data collected from the project consisted of the pre and posttest questionnaires and the self-evaluation forms. The information from the questionnaires gives a comparison of the pre test and posttest answers to the same questions. This information was then programmed into graph charts and reflected in Appendix F. Additional information in narrative format regarding the analysis of the questionnaires is reflected in Chapter Five, Field Experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The preparation phase of this ministry model project started in October 2004 shortly after the Collaborative Leadership Focus Group peer session, which was hosted by the writer in Richmond, Virginia. The writer had already purposed the specifics of the model and had begun acquiring basic information on servant leadership from the book, *Servant Leadership* by Robert K. Greenleaf. However, most of the work was compiling detailed biblical-based information on the work of the deacon. It was necessary to compile the information in a format that not only interpreted the scriptures but also gave examples and illustrations. This was a consuming but rewarding task. It actually enabled the writer to be reunited with the material on this subject by methodically combing through volumes in putting the modules together. The information was compiled utilizing the following primary sources: *Leadership Training Seminar Handout*, Rev. Marvin Miller, *The Baptist Deacon* by Robert Naylor, *The Work of the Deacon and Deaconess* by Harold Nichols, *Now that You are a Deacon* by Robert Forshee, and *Equipping Deacons on Caring Skills* by Homer D. Carter. The work included compiling individual personalized workbook binders for each participant. The preparation phase was ongoing from late October 2004 through early March 2005 prior to the start of the actual project on March 17, 2005.

The initial experience began with an information session with Context Associates whereby their help was solicited and various assignments were made. This also entailed a

complete briefing on the dynamics of the model and its objectives. An orientation session with the participants followed, which explained in detail the project proposal, format and expectations of the impending training sessions. It was also explained that the program was voluntary. Each participant was given a research protocol and consent form to acknowledge consent to participate. The form also set out stipulations regarding privacy and the right to withdraw prior to the completion of the training program. The writer also explained that privacy would be very important to foster the proper atmosphere for learning and freedom of expression. The training sessions were scheduled for the conference room, which allowed for a secluded environment.

The ten-module leadership training program was now underway. The pastor was the main facilitator and Reverend Ricardo Brown of Fifth Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia served as one of the facilitators along with Reverend Priscillae A. Burwell. Reverend Brown is a Doctor of Ministry student at Virginia University of Lynchburg (formerly Virginia Seminary and College). Reverend Brown is also a former pastor in the rural context and now co-pastor of Fifth Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia with his father, Dr. Earl M. Brown. Fifth Baptist Church is an urban ministry and has a very large congregation.

Reverend Priscillae A. Burwell is a Contextual Associate and Youth Minister of the Race Street Baptist. She was facilitator for the caring skills sessions and also discussed perspectives of males interfacing with females during crisis situations. Reverend Burwell is also a Doctor of Ministry student at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia.

The overall training sessions were very engaging and enlightening for the participants as well as the facilitators. The confidence of the participants escalated with

each session and it was shown in the richness of the discussions. However, it was noted from the inception of the training that there was apprehension among some of the participants with respect to writing or expressing their thoughts. The writer reminded the participants during the sessions of the equal playing field and dialogue began to flow.

Surprisingly, there was almost immediate feedback from many of the congregants. Most were in the curious arena, but upon learning more about the program, the feedback was very positive. Actually excitement abounded amidst the participants and the congregants. The congregation was very pleased with the selections of the laity for servant leadership office of the deacon.

Collection of Data

The data collected from the project consisted of the pre and posttest questionnaire and the self-evaluation forms. An interesting observation for the writer was the ratings the participants gave themselves during the self-evaluation. The writer was intentional in looking at the answers from the incumbents and the newer deacons, of whom two of the three were college graduates. The information from the questionnaires gave an analysis of the pre-test and post-test answers to the same questions. First, this information was analyzed after the completion of the training program. Secondly, the information was then programmed into graph charts and is reflected in Appendix F. The narrative portion of the analysis is captured in this document.

Each participant was provided with a personal training manual with the theme cover personalized. This created a personal sense of entitlement for each participant and there were verbal acknowledgements of approval for the impending journey. The

participants all exhibited eagerness to rise to another level in the deaconry. The training started on March 17, 2005 and ended on May 31, 2005.

The participants were faithful in attendance and always on time and ready for the sessions. The writer noticed a sincere bond created between the incumbent deacons and the walking deacons. There was always a good deal of synergy within the sessions. By the third session, the group agreed to extend the time frames and the facilitator accommodated by providing snacks and meals for the duration of the sessions.

Analysis of Data

Upon completion of the training sessions, the writer realized the value of the sessions and truly believed that the training would make a marked difference in ministry. This assertion is evident by the results of the pre-test and posttest questionnaire analysis. Questions are located in Appendix E.

- Question one referred to one's understanding of servant leadership being the authority to influence actions of others or the ability of one to influence the actions of others. Six of the seven participants agreed or strongly agreed in the pre test that it was authority but in the posttest all seven disagreed that servant leadership was one's authority to influence the actions of others. The writer sees this as quite significant in that in part the ministry model's objective was to rise above the grain of tradition.
- Question two regarding "designated authority making one a good leader" was almost unanimously answered as strongly agreed or agreed by six of the seven participants in the pre-test. However, in the posttest this was

reflected totally unanimously as strongly disagreed or agreed. The writer again believes that this is significant in that the question reflects one's attitude toward authority of office as the driving force of one's ability to perform in a manner in which one could be successful in the discharge of duties of the office of deacon.

- Question three speaks to one's attitude and humility in that it states "one cannot give orders until he/she can receive them?" In the pre-test this was unanimously cited as strongly agreed or agreed. Correspondingly, during the posttest the answers were essentially the same. This result also reflects the participants' understanding.

- Question four related to "deacons' duty to assist the pastor." This was answered unanimously as strongly agreed on the pre and post. The writer believes that this reflected a genuine understanding of the deacon's duties from a personal and official capacity. This conclusion was drawn not only from the questionnaire results but also the dialogue and actions of the participants.

- Question five referred to the desirable traits of a leader, which included: personality, patience, self-control, kindness and a spirit of compassion. During the pre-test four of the participants disagreed and one was neutral; however, during the posttest six of the participants still disagreed or strongly disagreed. The writer cannot directly identify a contributing factor for this situation.

- Question six, cited the word “deacon” as deriving from the Greek word “diakonos” meaning “servant.” There were however some significant gains in the strongly agree category on the posttest.
- Question seven was a Bible-based question referencing the specific scripture regarding qualification for the office of a deacon. Four of the participants agreed and three strongly agreed during the pretest. There were gains in the strongly agree category on the posttest. In question eight regarding a deacon possessing “wisdom” there were gains in the posttest strongly agree category.
- Question nine reflected the deacon’s understanding of their scriptural qualities as cited in Acts chapter six. These answers reflected a significant learning from the training based on the answers. The posttest was unanimously favorable as to the correct answers.
- Question ten assessed the deacon’s understanding of their direct relationship to the pastor. The results showed some gains in the strongly agree category which was positive of the treatment training.
- Question eleven inquired about the deacon’s role in worship. The answers reflected a significant gain in understanding in that there was unanimous affirmative answers in the strongly agree and agree category opposed to two disagree answers on the pretest.
- Question twelve dealt with the two scriptural ordinances of the Baptist Church, which are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The training reflects

favorable gains from the pre to the posttest. However, there were still two unfavorable answers in the posttest. The writer pondered the results and felt that maybe the question was misread.

Training Model Outcomes

The final outcomes of the pre and posttest results reflected favorable results from the leadership training. Moreover, the feedback from the participants was very positive. The writer, however, still sensed apprehension in some of the stakeholders' confidence to process and understand the questions correctly. The writer anticipated a possible wide variance in how the questions were answered by the incumbent deacons and the walking deacons. However, results were almost equal.

This was a good learning experience for the writer because the writer recognized that more thought could have been put into the preparation phase of the design of the questions with respect to the targeted audience. This was revealed after the questions had been designed and the program implemented. The writer was cognizant of this situation for the duration of the process.

The writer also recognized during the training that there were several common threads that continued to run throughout the training. One was a desire for a closer bond between deaconry and congregants. The participants were very eager to embrace new ideas but more especially, they exhibited a new awareness and desire to change direction and take the necessary steps to strive for excellence in the deaconry. This was evident through the dialogue for implementing a deacon family ministry program and more involvement with other ministries. There were also discussions among the participants about the possibility of broadening the scope of such training throughout other ranks of the auxiliaries of the church.

The pre/posttest results can be found in Appendix F.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

As this writer reflects on the experience of the ministry project, a snapshot of the overall learning experience and challenge of the doctor of ministry program at United Theological Seminary comes to the forefront. The writer likens it to the Apostle Paul's words in Corinthians "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9). Never did the writer dream that God would have such a blessing in store for this servant.

From the inception of the program there was a special joy starting with framing the spiritual autobiography. It was actually this initial stage of the journey that became the birthing chamber for the passion to give back to the rural context ministry that had been such a blessing down through the years. Also, there was something within that was set free during this writing assignment that would have remained below the surface deep within the writer's spirit. It was at that point that the infant stage of the ministry model was born. The ministry context and synergy followed and the ministry project came into focus.

The writer admits that he had not realized how profound the overall collaborative leadership peer group experience at United Theological Seminary would be. It has heightened the passion to pursue writing and to include the idea of publishing a document designed to create synergy within the leadership ranks of the rural ministry context. The

passion has also been birthed to pursue create a focus group at UTS on “Rural Context Ministry Renewal.”

Early during the administration of the ministry project, the writer recognized a hindrance among some of the stakeholders. There was a noticeable apprehension and skepticism among the participants, particularly within the ranks of the incumbent deacons. It was believed that this was due in part to their perceived attitudes about their educational levels compared to others in the group who had more advanced education. This included apprehension to engage in open discussion and writing because of their perceived deficiencies in writing and articulation skills. However, it has been the writer’s experience that, for the most part, these apprehensions exist throughout rural context ministries, especially among small rural black churches in the Farmville, Virginia area where the public schools were closed for six years. The writer felt their anguish from that moment. Upon recognizing this situation, the writer was intentional in fostering an environment conducive to encouraging all participants to recognize their individual strengths and talents and assuring them of equal ability to meet the challenges of the impending training process. This served as a tremendous source of encouragement to the participants, which reflected in an acknowledgement of trust and a desire to tackle the tasks at hand.

The implementation of the training program was administered utilizing a team approach. The writer realized the concept set forth by Action Research theory of using a team and engaging the participants in mutual discovery. The writer was the principal facilitator and assisted by Reverend Ricardo Brown, a former pastor in the rural context and currently a pastor in the urban context. Also, on the team were Reverend Priscillae Burwell, Associate and Youth Minister at Race Street. This arrangement was intentional

in an effort to create dialogue and synergy within the group from different ministry contexts. This allowed for discussions of differences in urban and rural context as well as issues involving females. There were many spirited discussions during the group sessions.

Verbal feedback was realized much earlier than the writer would have imagined. There was excitement and dialogue within the ranks of the congregation very early in the process. Even though many did not realize the scope of the training that was being administered, there were many positive comments regarding the effort to enhance the quality of leadership within the deaconate. There were also cries to expand the effort to all ranks of leadership within the ministry. The writer recalls a specific incident that was quite warming. One Sunday the writer was absent from the pulpit and it was reported that the chairman of deacons was explaining a matter to the congregation and included in his remarks that “The pastor and deacons were working on a dynamic leadership program to improve the overall ministry and that he was very excited about the training and looked forward to doing a better job in his office.” That was a great report to hear and very encouraging to the pastor.

As the training continued, it was interesting to see each participant embrace the training program with a great deal of zeal and eagerness. They would come to the sessions with their individual personalized note binders ready for instruction and dialogue. Actually, word got out around the church about these mysterious meetings and people would conspicuously show up at the church during the training sessions, presumably to get a bird’s eye view. On one occasion the training session was held downstairs in the fellowship hall where dinner had been prepared and the pastor called

the deaconess and a few other leaders to join in the dinner. This allowed for good informal discussions about servant leadership.

The training ended on a good note and the participants were encouraged and proud of their accomplishments. They immediately inquired about follow-up training and putting together the Deacons' Family Ministry assignments. The writer was encouraged by the results of the training and considered it a success. The writer was equally proud of the participants' efforts and participation.

A very profound experience for the writer was the reading regimen. This challenge led to new energy and insight and the passion to tread further into uncharted waters. With respect to the finished work of the ministry project, the writer initially had felt that the project was a contribution to that environment which had been such a blessing over the years. It was believed that at the conclusion the writer would be free to move on to new horizons. However, the ministry project seems to have drawn the writer deeper within the rural context as an advocate of change.

The writer envisions several possibilities for this collaborative servant leadership training ministry model. First, it could be expanded in time and administered in a more comprehensive format. This gives rise to the concept of "systematic training" which the writer often referred to throughout the project. Secondly, the program can be easily modified for training leaders within various other ministries and also laity aspiring to leadership positions. The component that would be expanded would be the initial chapter, which would focus more on leadership dynamics. In fact, at present all leadership appointments are on hold at Street Baptist Church until all leaders undergo a brief leadership seminar to be completed by the end of the first quarter. Also, the writer truly

believes this training model can provide the systematic training infrastructure within the small rural black ministry context as proposed at the onset of the model.

Another possibility would be to market this model to other rural context ministries as a training infrastructure for the training of laity for the ranks of servant leadership. This could also be expanded to be more comprehensive in nature where time is not of the essence and allow for more in-depth dialogue within the sessions and even include practical exercises.

The last dynamic of the construction of this model was that it caused the writer to really look at the laity and the idea of an enrichment type of training to facilitate gift discovery. This could be a prelude to leadership training and also the gateway to various ministry staffing.

A lasting and fond memory of this project is reflected in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to the disciples in (John 15:16), “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should do and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain . . .” To God Be the Glory!

APPENDIX A
DEACONS' LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM AGENDAS

Race Street Baptist Church

Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III, M.Div.

March 17, 2005

Devotionals

Introduction To Servant Leadership (Deaconate) Training Program.....Rev. J. Taylor

Overview of Program Format/Consent Forms

Dialogue with Participants – Expectations/Views on needs of Church

Pre-Test (Explanation and format)

Post Pre-Test DialoguePastor and Participants

Express Your Feelings

Format for Future Sessions

Closing Prayer

Race Street Baptist Church
Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III, M. Div.

March 31, 2005

Devotionals

Review of Overview of Program Format/Consent Forms

Dialogue with Participants – Expectations/Views on needs of Church

Issuance of Personal Note Books and Program Materials

Review of Program Learning Objectives

Module I – General Leadership and Servant Principles and Concepts

Break

Module II – The Origin of the Deacon

Group Dialogue on Learning Activities

Express Your Feelings

Closing Prayer

Race Street Baptist Church
Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III

April 12, 2005

Devotionals

Review of Learning Objectives

Dialogue with Participants –

Module III – Requisites and Qualifications of a Deacon

Break

Module IV – Organization of Deacons' Ministry

Group Dialogue on Learning Activities

Express Your Feelings

Closing Prayer

Race Street Baptist Church
Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III

April 19, 2005

Devotionals

Review of Learning Objectives

Dialogue with Participants –

Module V – The Deacons' Role in Observance of the Ordinances

(Practical Exercise)

Break

Module VI – The Deacons' Role in the Worship Services

Group Dialogue on Learning Activities

Express Your Feelings

Closing Prayer

Race Street Baptist Church
Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III

April 26, 2005

Guest Lecturer: Rev. Ricardo Brown (D.Min. Candidate)
Virginia University of Lynchburg
Assistant Pastor – Fifth Baptist Church Richmond, Virginia

Devotionals

Dialogue with Participants –

Module VII – The Deacon's Role in Ministering To Members.... Rev. Brown

The Dynamics and Differences in Urban/Rural Leadership Challenges

Closing Prayer

Fellowship Dinner

Race Street Baptist Church

Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III, M.Div.

May 10, 2005

Devotionals

Review of Learning Objectives

Dialogue with Participants –

Module IX – Relationships

Break

Module X – Training Requirements to Become a Deacon

Group Dialogue on Learning Activities

Express Your Feelings

Closing Prayer

Race Street Baptist Church

Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III, M. Div.

May 24, 2005

Guest Lecturer: Rev. Priscillae Burwell, Youth Minister Race Street Baptist Church
(D.Min. Candidate – Virginia Union University)

Devotionals

Module VIII – Deacons Serving in the Time of Crises (Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills)

- Power for Ministry
- Basic Caring Skills
- Caring for the Hospitalized and their Families
- Caring for the Bereaved
- Caring for Those Experiencing Spiritual Doubt and Guilt
- Caring for the Lonely
- Caring for Church Members in Conflict
- Caring for Parents and Children in Conflict

Express Your Feelings

Group Dialogue on Learning Activities

Closing Prayer

Race Street Baptist Church
Farmville, Virginia

Deacons' Leadership Training Program

Equipping Laity For Servant Leadership:
Modeling A Servant's Heart
In the Small Rural Church

Rev. James H. Taylor, III, M.Div.

May 31, 2005

Devotionals

Review of Learning Objectives

Dialogue with Participants –

Post Test

Course Summary

Break Out Learning Dialogue

Express Your Feelings

Closing Prayer

Fellowship Dinner

APPENDIX B
RESEARCH PROTOCOL AND CONSENT FORM

Research Protocol and Consent Form

Research Protocol

This researcher recognized that in order to realize the goals and objectives of the ministry proposed ministry project model, he will seek to capture the synergies arising out of the interaction between contemporary and indigenous knowledge, and the conditions and processes that produces and reinforce empowerment and sustainability in a classroom learning environment.

Researcher _____ Date _____

The participants in this project will respect the general context of a classroom-learning environment. The researcher will not impose any unwarranted demands on the participants. We will give each other respect at all times. Under no circumstances will promises be made to the participants that cannot be followed through.

Participant _____ Date _____

Consent Form

I agree to participant in the Doctor of Ministry “Equipping Laity to Leadership: With a Servant’s Heart” with Reverend James H. Taylor, III as the principal investigator. I understand that this project will take place during the months of March through May with follow-up as needed in June of 2005. I understand and agree to participate in pre-interviews/Survey and post interviews/survey. I also agree to have the learning sessions videotaped and/or tape recorded and to have photographs taken of myself during the project and to participate in the monitoring and evaluation. I understand that there are no known risks or harm and the investigator and participants will respect confidentiality. All reported data and information will be altered so as not to reveal my identify. I understand that I have the right to opt out of this research project for good cause at anytime without penalty or pressure. For any questions, please contact Dr. Harold A. Hudson, Adjunct Professor of United Theological Seminary.

I have read and interpreted this consent form and agree to all the terms.

Signature _____ Date _____ Witness _____

APPENDIX C
DEACONS' LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

EQUIPPING LAITY
FOR SERVANT
LEADERSHIP;
MODELING A
SERVANT'S
HEART

DEACONS' TRAINING
RACE STREET BAPTIST
CHURCH

Leadership Training

For

Deacons

Race Street Baptist Church

Farmville, Virginia

Equipping Laity For Servant
Leadership: “Modeling a
Servant’s Heart”

In the Rural Black Church

Deacons' Training Course

Greetings and Blessings:

Welcome to the Race Street Baptist Church Leadership for Deacons Training Course.

The materials for this course were adapted from the following sources: *The Baptist Deacon* (Robert E. Naylor); Dr. Marvin Miller, D.Min. – *Leadership Training Handout*; *Servant Leadership* (Robert K. Greenleaf), *The work of the Deacon And Deaconess* (Harold Nichols), *Now that You are a Deacon* (Robert Foshee), *Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills* (Homer D. Carter), *The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches* (Edward T. Hiscox), and *The Holy Bible* (KJV). This course covers the general principles of servant leadership, the origin, qualifications, duties, responsibilities and caring skills for deacons. This training is divided into ten major segments (Modules 1-10)

Deacons' Leadership Training

Module – 1

General Leadership Principles and Concepts

Topic: General Leadership and Servant Leaders' characteristics and principles

Definition of Leadership: The ability to influence others to achieve the goals of an organization

Who is the Servant Leader?

A. Characteristics of a Good Leader:

1. Personality
2. Kindness
3. Courtesy
4. Poise
5. Patience
6. Tolerance
7. Self Control
8. Sense of Humor
9. Vitality/Enthusiasm
10. Regularity/Punctuality
11. A spirit of cooperation
12. Self-Confidence/God Reliant

B. QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER

1. Discipline
2. Vision
3. Common Sense
4. Decisiveness
5. Fortitude
6. Humility
7. Compassion
8. Patience and Endurance
9. Fellowship
10. Inspiration Power

Module – 2

The Origin of the Deacon

Topic: THE ORIGIN OF THE DEACON

Purpose: To discover the origin of the deacon and the deacon's role in the local church.

Scripture Reference: Acts 6:3; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-12

Discussion: In the early New Testament church, the apostles requested that the church select "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint to this business." This business was the "serving" of the daily needs of the people. In the New Testament, there are many references to various kinds of service to be performed. Paul distinguished between bishops (pastors) and deacons, clearly indicating a difference between the kinds of service performed by these officials.

Note that the seven men chosen for the special tasks of caring for the widows and serving tables were not specifically called deacons in Acts 6. First and foremost, they were called to perform a service. When the term "deacon" is subsequently used in the New Testament, it is generally assumed that it refers to men who were performing service similar to that, which was assigned to the original seven. The word "deacon" is derived from the Greek work "diakonos" which means servant.

With the evolution of time and the growth of the Christian church came more specific definitions of the responsibilities of church officers. By about 100 A.D., there were three orders of clerics: bishop (minister), presbyter, and deacon, of whom the deacon was the lowest in rank. Not only this concept, but subsequent growth of the idea of the cleric as set aside from the laity, has caused great divisions between Christian bodies. Today we find the concept and duties of the deacon vary considerably from denomination to denomination and from church to church. The deacon in the congregational type of church such as the Baptist is a layperson who is chosen by the church.

Module – 3

Requisites and Qualifications of a Deacon

Topic: REQUISITES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

Purpose: To discover the requirements and qualifications of a deacon as expressed in the Word of God.

Scripture Reference: Rom 3:23-24; I Cor 13

Discussion: No amount of devotion, ability, talent or preparations can be considered as the primary prerequisites for persons who serve as deacons. The prime prerequisite must be a relationship with God, an aptitude for servant leadership required that office and a thorough training in the skills required of the office of the deaconate. There are two basic features of readiness for the service in this office – requisites and qualifications. Generally speaking, although these terms are somewhat similar, requisites may be thought of as the person's relationship with God, while qualifications may be considered to be the person's suitability to foster relationship with others through the inherent role of the deaconate.

- A. **Requisites:** According to the dictionary, the meaning of "requisite" is "that which is required, indispensable, or essential." While it would be a burdensome task to attempt to list all requisites that would be binding on those who serve as deacons, several major important themes emerge.
 1. **Convicted Persons:** Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." A belief in the truth of this scripture and knowledge that it applies to them is essential to deacons. There are many church members who are not convinced that they are sinners, because they see sin in only the light of the major evils of the times. If they do not recognize sin in their own lives, how can they help others to the knowledge of God and to forgiveness of sins through the reconciling Christ?
 2. **Redeemed Persons:** With the acknowledgement of sin in their lives, deacons must have knowledge that God in Christ has redeemed them. Romans 3:24 says, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..." Other scripture on this subject includes Eph. 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." To redeem means to "buy back or ransom." The fact that this redemption has occurred in their lives makes it possible for deacons to help others to this same saving knowledge.
 3. **Baptized by Immersion:** Although baptism by immersion is not a test as to whether a person is a Christian, it remains true that the Baptist faith teaches baptism in this manner. Therefore, it goes without saying that deacons in a Baptist church will have observed the standard of baptism through immersion. Anyone coming from another faith who was baptized by immersion can be accepted into the church on Christian experience and can therefore become a deacon if accepted by the pastor and church.

4. **Conversant with the Holy Bible:** Deacons should have more than a casual knowledge of God's Word. In it is recorded the history of the Hebrew people and of God's self-revelation in their lives and individuals and as a nation. The revelation of God through Christ is there to bring the individual back after the separation caused by sin. The life and work of the deacon demand that casual readings be replaced by planned study and that time be given to researching the scriptures for their meaning and application to life.
 5. **Persons with a Prayer Life:** Deacons must practice unceasing prayer if they are to be able to find the fullness of the Christian life for them selves and, moreover, if they are to be leaders among the people. Prayer is the avenue of them to communicate with God and for God to communicate with them. Through their own prayer life they can then be an example in the church's prayer life, as well as being able to assist other persons to a more meaningful relationship with God through prayer.
 6. **Deacons Who Worship:** Worship experiences are an essential part of the deacons' lives. In their personal relationships with God and in their leadership in their own homes, worship plays an important role. Public worship provides deacons with the privilege of participation in a corporate adventure with God of having communion with God in the most favorable surroundings and with those who seek a similar worship experience. Deacons have the opportunity to show their need for worship experiences by their faithful attendance at the Sunday and mid-week worship services and at the business meetings of the church. They set the example for other members of the church, especially new members.
 7. **An Example:** In every facet of Christian living not previously mentioned, deacons should try to live as an example of "the new person in Jesus Christ."
- B. Qualifications:** In I Timothy 3:8-13, Paul gave Timothy a list of traits that persons should possess if they are to qualify as deacons. One's social status, friendship, etc., should not determine who gets selected for the ranks of the deaconate.
1. **Serious** (verse 8a)
Deacons shall be serious minded in their persona. Moreover, they should be dignified in their appearance and manner; exemplifying high ideals and practicing them in their interactions with others. They should subscribe to soberness in their daily walk and refrain from indulging in the kinds of activities and behavior that demeans one's character.

Moreover, Deacons should be even tempered and not easily disturbed. They should be examples of the love, as set out by the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth (see I Cor. 12:4-7).

2. Not Doubled-Tongued (verse 8b)

Deacons shall try to have truth in their minds and hearts, speaking to all persons only that which they feel and believe. They should not say to any person anything that they would not say to all people in the same way. The undesirable trait of “straddling the fence” by saying something to one person and the opposite to another, or intentionally making a statement that could be misinterpreted or have a double meaning should be shunned. Deacons should at all cost avoid situations in which they would be untrue to themselves.

3. Not Addicted to Wine (verse 8c)

In the time of Jesus and Paul, wine was used as a substitute for water because water was scarce and was often impure. In all of recorded history, there have been those who have overindulged in strong drink, and so the warning here is against such a practice by deacons.

4. Not Greedy (verse 8d)

The desire for an income that will provide the physical possessions persons need in order to live comfortably and have some financial protection in emergencies and retirement is not wrong. Nowhere is it recorded that Jesus blamed those who had more money than others. However, Jesus was very critical of those who put their possessions first. Giving possessions top priority promotes the desire to acquire something that someone else has. There are those whose economic situations require their employment in a second job if their total income is to provide adequately for their families. When persons have two jobs, they may have inadequate time to devote to church responsibilities. Careful consideration, therefore, should be given as to whether they should be called upon to serve as deacon or other office as long as these circumstances continue.

5. Personal Faith (Verse 9) (John 16:12-15)

Deacons must be confident in matters of doctrine and personal faith. They will recognize the Bible as the source of truth, as God’s Word and will for their lives and for the world. They must see this as the “mysterious divine force” that guides their walk.

6. A Proved One (Verse 10)

Deacons should be “blameless” when subject to some observation. This does not suggest a demand for perfection, which no human being can achieve, but is nonetheless, a suggestion that deacons should maintain a high level of personal conduct. Controlling the tongue plays an important part in conduct since speech is one of the means of communications with others. Deacons must keep confidences. Judgment will include the deacons’ character, sensitivity to concerns of the church, ability, and desire to be of service. These qualifications

should be demonstrated in the deacons' social life outside of the church as well as in the church in interacting with others.

The deacons must be able to train younger women, men, girls and boys and they should have the knowledge, wisdom and experience to counsel them relative to life's problems. In counseling, deacons are warned not to go too far, such as into psychiatry or marriage counseling, or the legal ramifications of such.

6. Marital Status (I Tim. 3:12)

In Paul's time, there were some men who had more than one wife. Although one does not know how prevalent the practice of polygamy was among the Jews at that time, it is known that they had the habit of adopting the customs of surrounding peoples.

Some people interpret Paul's word to mean that a person who has remarried cannot rightfully hold the office of a deacon because that person would then have more than one spouse. *A church should scrutinize this theory very closely before it makes a decision to accept or eliminate a remarried person for the office of deacon.* Consider, for example the individual who is living an exemplary Christian life and possessing the requisites and qualifications for becoming a deacon, whose spouse has died. Perhaps such a person is already a deacon. Later there is a remarriage. It would be hard to believe that such a remarriage would deplete one's spiritual life or ability to serve.

Being married does not necessarily equip one to do a better job in the office of deacon. Paul, who was single man, gave a considerable amount of advice and counsel regarding family life and relationships.

7. Efficiency at Home (1Tim. 3:12b)

Deacons must manage or assist in managing their children and their homes well. Social conditions have changed since the days of Paul. Women enjoy a more independent way of life and a more equal footing educationally, morally, and economically, while children seek independence at a much earlier age. The control of the family by sheer male dominance rarely exists in today's society. Order in the family comes about as a result of cooperative action. Obtaining this cooperation, so that the life of the family may run smoothly, proves the ability of today's deacons to manage or assist in managing their homes.

Besides the above eight qualifications, there are some others we should note. Deacons should be devoted to their task. There are many opportunities to serve, most of which are pleasant. But some tasks are disagreeable and difficult. The manner in which the deacon carries out the less pleasant tasks attests to his devotion.

Deacons should possess wisdom above and beyond the average layperson. Wisdom is not found in books and schools. Rather, it is the ability to judge soundly and deal sensibly with facts, especially as they relate to life and conduct. The Bible contains many references to wisdom, especially in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. True wisdom comes from love, understanding, and concern for others. Deacons should practice Jesus' instruction in Matthew 10:16 to "be wise as servants, and harmless as doves."

Deacons should use their time judiciously. The use of time involves putting first things first. It is the choice of spending time on that which is best, not on something that is only second best.

When deacons have the responsibility for finances and property of the church, it is necessary that they be good businesspersons.

Module – 4

Organization

Topic: ORGANIZATION

Purpose: To acquaint deacons with the organization and administration of the Deaconate Ministry.

Scripture Reference: Prov. 29:18; Acts 6:2

Discussion: Solomon wrote: “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18). This thought applies to the work of the board of deacons. The deacons should be those nearest to the spiritual needs of the people. No church can thrive unless it is led, not only by precept, but also by example. The deacons should provide such leadership. It is in this spirit that they must view their labors.

Each Baptist church is its own sovereign body. The pastor and the deacons should determine the specific needs of the church and board of deacons should be organized to meet these needs. In organizing, items to be considered include the deaconess ministry and its role (e.g., whether there will be a separate ministry); the number of deacons to comprise the deacon ministry; the term of office of deacons (life or rotational); how deacons will be selected (a nominating committee, inviting nominations from the floor at a church business meeting, having the deacon ministry present names of nominees directly to the church of action); the work of the ministry (restriction to a few duties or broad extending into many areas related to the mission of the church); how deacons will be inducted into service (ordination, installation, consecration, etc.); and how vacancies will be filled.

Module – 5

The Deacons' Role in the Observance of the Ordinances

Topic: THE DEACONS' ROLE IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE ORDINANCES

Purpose: To explore the deacons' role in observance of the ordinances.

Scripture Reference: Mark 14:17; John 13:30; I Cor. 11:23; Luke 12:50; Matt. 20:22; Mark 10:38; Heb 6:2

Discussion: The ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbols, which remind Christians of the deepest and most sacred aspects of the Christian faith. These two ordinances are generally regarded as the two observances of the church commanded by Jesus Christ. The deaconate play a significant role in administering these solemn symbols.

- A. **Baptism:** Baptism is regarded as an outward expression of an inward belief. It is much more than a simple ceremony, which must be performed just before a candidate, becomes a member of the church. The candidate must be made to realize the importance of this event. The deacons can do much to make the experience enrich the spiritual life of the individual.

1. Physical Arrangements

Long before baptism takes place, the deacons should make certain that physical surroundings are as attractive, convenient, and clean as possible. No other group in the church will view the need for complete upkeep of this part of the property with as much interest as the deacons. All facilities for the baptism, including the pool, rooms for dressing, approaches, and equipment should be well lighted, clean and well ventilated. The deacons are usually responsible for filling the pool and making sure it is at the proper temperature. If gifts or flowers are to be given to those baptized, the deacons should make sure they are provided (usually by the deaconesses). The deacons should ensure that candidates are thoroughly briefed as to what clothing and supplies to wear and bring with them (usually by the deaconesses). The deaconesses also usually make sure that other necessary items are available, e.g., hair dryers, towels, shower caps, safety pins, and if possible footies for men and women. The deaconesses usually are responsible for making sure that the linen is clean and that an extra supply of linen is available for those persons who might join at the last minute, expecting to be baptized.

2. Briefing the Candidates

The candidates should be thoroughly instructed in the meaning of baptism. They should also be informed as to how the church regards the rite. Furthermore, it would be helpful to them to know the interpretations of the meaning of baptism made by other churches. It would be well to have the candidates taught by the Pastor, deacons, deaconesses, church school, and during personal interviews. Most churches today require candidates for baptism to attend new members' orientation conducted by the pastor before they are baptized. All procedures, such as, entering the water, being baptized, and leaving the baptistery should be described in detail to the candidates. In most Baptist churches, the deaconesses participate in briefing the candidates.

The candidates should be informed of the importance of being on time for baptism. All candidates should be dressed and ready for baptism well ahead of the time the baptism is scheduled to begin.

Shortly before going through the baptismal ritual, candidates' minds should be refreshed in the Bible teachings and background regarding baptism so that the experience will appear more significant and impressive. One should remember that it was not easy for Christ to suffer separation from God and be buried in a tomb, and that the experience of going through the baptismal waters is, in one sense, a reminder of the price he paid for our redemption.

3. Baptismal Service

The time of baptism is optional in the local churches. Some churches hold baptism as part of the morning or evening worship service. Others hold the baptismal service on a separate day. Regardless of when the baptism is held, no effort should be spared to make this never-to-be-forgotten occasion a memorable, richly rewarding experience conducted in a prayerful and Spirit-filled atmosphere.

The members of the candidates' families or the deacons and deaconesses should assist the candidates. Planning well in advance should be accomplished so as not to embarrass the candidates. It is well to include all instructions to the candidates in written form, along with some Biblical references on baptism.

Baptism by immersion is the traditional way for persons to show their acceptance of Christ as their Savior before the other people of God. This service should be carried out naturally, without excessive emotional display.

- B. The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper, observed by the entire congregation, is the other ordinance that was specifically mentioned by our Lord as a practice for believers. The time and frequency of the observance of Communion varies among churches. No scriptural directive is given for when the observance should be held. The only precedent is that set by Jesus and the 12 disciples when they met for the Passover meal on the night before the crucifixion. (Mark 14:17; John 13:30; I Cor. 11:23)

1. Frequency of Observance

There is usually a designated Sunday for observance of the Lord's Supper on a monthly basis. Also this observance takes place on such special seasonal occasions as Maundy Thursday, Christmas, Watchnight, or candlelight services. The custom of holding the Communion after close of or near the end of the regular worship service stems from the practice of closed Communion, before which those who are not members of the church were offered a convenient opportunity to depart.

2. Practical Pointers

A number of things are done to make this service of commemoration helpful and vital. Preparation of the Lord's Supper includes making certain that the linen is clean and ironed, the bowl and napkins are ready for the Pastor, the trays are clean and polished, the elements are freshly

prepared, and the table is properly arranged.

Churches with deaconesses do not agree as to what their participation should be in the preparation and serving of the Communion. In some, deaconesses do not participate in this service in any way. At the other extreme, in some churches they are considered to be deacons and act in every detail alongside the men. Other churches assume a middle position in which the deaconesses care for the utensils and linens, may or may not prepare the elements, but do not take part in serving them.

The deacons are to know exactly what their assignment is so that no confusion and awkwardness will detract from the solemnity of the service.

3. Conducting the Service

In many churches, the Pastor offers the prayers during the Communion service. However, it is very appropriate for the deacons do so. When a deacon is called upon to lead in prayer, he should be informed in advance because some cannot pray spontaneously. After the congregation is served, the deacons and deaconesses are served.

The important thing to bear in mind is that dignity, solemnity, and a worshipful atmosphere should be preserved. This ordinance is a memorial to the Lord and everything in it should honor and glorify His name.

Module – 6

The Deacons' Role in the Worship Services

Topic: THE DEACONS' ROLE IN THE WORSHIP SERVICES

Purpose: To discover the role of the deacons in the church worship services.

Scripture Reference: Mark 14:17; John 13:30; I Cor. 11:23

Discussion: The worship of Almighty God is central in the needs of the Christian. Planning attractive physical surroundings, assisting the deacons and Pastor in making arrangements for regular or special services, ushering in a helpful manner, and securing the attendance of worshippers are some ways a deaconess may participate in the worship service.

1. Care of the Sanctuary

Nothing short of the strictest cleanliness of the sanctuary, or any other room used for services is essential to true worship. The deacons should insist that the place of worship is immaculately clean. Where there is a separate trustee board, the deacons should view all problems regarding this property as being within the province of the trustees. Trustees should be allowed the opportunity to do their job, as opposed to the deacons taking care of the job.

Deacons would do well to approach the sanctuary as if they were visitors seeing it for the first time, and to be observant and critical of its appearance as visitors would be.

Deacons should also be concerned about other areas in caring for the sanctuary such as hymnals and Bibles, flowers for beauty, public address system, instruments in good working order, etc.

2. Prayer and Praise Services

Prayer before the beginning of the worship service is practiced in many churches and varies in form with the desires of the Pastor. Some pastors have the entire board of deacons meet with him; some meet with whatever deacons is free; others like to meet with the choir for prayer. The wishes of the Pastor are to be respected in this matter.

If the Pastor does not meet for prayer with the choir, a deacon should perform this important duty.

3. Midweek Services

This is a usual practice in the Baptist church. Jesus prayed continually for himself, for his disciples, and for all who followed him. He urged his followers to pray, giving them a pattern to follow in prayer and promised of blessing and reward in God's response. Of all the lay people, the deacons in particular should feel a serious concern for the health of the prayer service. In most churches, the deacons are responsible for this service, in the absence of the Pastor. Some churches let the deacons and deaconesses lead the prayer service side-by-side in the absence of the Pastor.

4. The Pulpit

It is usually the deacons who have responsibility to see that the pulpit is occupied at each worship service. Although the Pastor will usually be in the pulpit, illness, conventions, convocations, conferences, vacation and the like may temporarily leave the pulpit vacant. Then the deacons must find a substitute or approve a substitute recommend by the Pastor.

The deacons should make certain that everything is done for guest to ensure their comfort and to make their visit as pleasant as possible. The extent of such arrangements depends on the distance guests have traveled, their mode of transportation, and the length of their stay. If they are coming by public transportation, arrange where and when to meet them and then take them to where they are to stay. When they are ready to leave, take them back or give them directions as to how to return.

In many instances, an honorarium should be given. The board of deacons and the Pastor should agree this upon when the decision is made to invite guests, and it should be given to them privately before they leave. In many churches, it has been a practice to present the honorarium publicly but most progressive churches have gotten away from this.

5. A Greeting for All

A church gets a reputation as a friendly church or a cold church, depending on the welcome, which it gives to all. It is at this point that deacons set the examples for the rest of the members. It is customary in some churches to have the deacons' station themselves at every entrance to welcome each person to the church. Taking time to greet and speak to those who are members is also helpful in making a friendly church. Encouraging a happy fellowship among the members is a prime responsibility of the deacons.

6. Children and Youth

Oftentimes deacons can become so engaged with their relationships with adults that they overlook the children. Nonetheless, Jesus had time for the little ones. Through the Board of Christian Education and the trustees, churches often set up programs and accommodations for a nursery. While this endeavor is not the responsibility of the deacons, it should be of interest to them.

Module – 7

The Deacons' Role in Ministering to Members

Topic: THE DEACONS' ROLE IN MINISTERING TO MEMBERS

Purpose: To explore the role of deacons in ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of church members.

Scripture Reference: I Tim 5:9-11; Tit 2:3-5

Discussion: As previously mentioned, the primary role of the deacons is to assist the Pastor. Deacons are responsible for visiting the sick and shut-ins. They may be paired with their wives who are deaconesses. When visiting sick females with deaconesses, the deaconesses should go in the sick room ahead of the deacons and make sure the woman is covered and otherwise presentable. The deacons are responsible for serving Communion to the sick and shut-ins.

Deacons are also responsible for a variety of ministries in the interest of kingdom building. Deacons should be good stewards, not just of the tithe (TEN-percent of gross income), but also of time and talent. They should be mission minded, and should emphasize the mission of the church as they visit the members in their homes.

Evangelism is a part of the deacons' everyday work. Deacons should set examples by their habits. Stewardship, Bible reading, self-improvement, and a prayer life are habits which deacons should develop and display in their own lives.

Deacons must administer discipline. Two general kinds of offenders in the church subject to discipline are (1) those that have committed acts unbecoming to a Christian, and (2) those that have been neglectful of their Christian calling. Those in the first category include malicious gossipers or talk that tends to disrupt the fellowship. Deacons must deal with these issues.

Module – 8

Deacons serving in the time
of crisis
(Equipping Deacons in caring skills)

Topic: Equipping Deacons to serve in the time of crisis.

Purpose: To explore fundamental biblical helps in equipping deacons in enhancing their caring skills.

Scripture Reference: Ex. 3:11,12; Matt. 28:20; Acts 6:3; I Peter 2:9; 2Cor. 12:9; Jn. 14:12; Matt. 22:37-39; Luke 10:33-37; Matt 25; 31-46; Matt. 25:40; Matt. 9:20-22; John 4:7-26; Matt. 10:19; Gal. 6:2-5.

Section I. Power for Ministry

The deacon's ministry is a shared ministry. Deacons are called to partnership in ministry under the leadership of the Pastor. God's cherished doctrine of the priesthood of all believers means more than the access of every believer to the Father; it also means each Christian is responsible to care for and minister to one another. Deacons can lead the way in this ministry and model care for the entire congregation.

DEACONS NEED TO BE EQUIPPED FOR SUCH A CARING MINISTRY. This means deacons need to develop basic caring skills and learn to apply them in specific ministry situations. The follow segments of this module will present some resources helping develop such skills. However keep in mind that these skills must not be a substitute for the spiritual power essential for God-given ministry.

Power for ministry comes directly from God's presence in your life. But God also gives power through other persons.

- A. Power through God's presence – The deacon's personal relationship to God through Christ is the foundation for all caring ministry. (Moses could not accept the awesome challenge God had set before him until he heard God's promise to be with him. When Moses said to God.... who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"...God responded, "I will be with you". Ex. 3:11.....He found power through assurance of God's presence.....

1. God Power provides for adequacy for ministry.....
2. It provides motivation to care for the needs of others
3. Provides sensitivity to the needs of others....
4. Provides guidance in using caring skills.

B. The Power of a Human Support System – The deacon does not minister in a vacuum. He is a part of the human support system that includes his own family, the fellowship of his local congregation and the organizations within his own church.... That support system provides resources both for the deacon’s personal growth and for the help in ministering to others.

1. Family support system.....
2. The church fellowship provides support.

Section II. Basic Caring Skills

Each deacon is a part of a “royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (I Peter 2:9). Therefore the deacon has the power to bless and affirm as he listens, the power to speak the word of forgiveness as he shows acceptance, the opportunity to work with the Holy Spirit as he asks the right questions, and the opportunity to show a continuing concern beyond his own resources as he senses a need to suggest other helpers.

The deacon who takes the “Family Care” ministry seriously will soon discover that God has given him the power to help others.

1. **Listening for Insight** – Active listening is not a simple technique that a deacon pulls out of his kit whenever one in his group has a problem..... It is a method for putting to work a basic set of attitudes.....toward that which God has given him.....
 - a. Listen Non-critically
 - b. Manage your own feelings
 - c. Avoid Advice
 - d. Be Impartial
 - e. Remain Unshockable
 - f. Keep Calm
 - g. Stick to Specifics
 - h. Pay attention
 - i. Listen for more than facts

j. Watch interference

k. Allow silences.

2. Building Trust – The deacon ministers not only in the time of problems but also has the opportunities for building trust through affirmation he can give on other significant occasions...such as: birthdays, weddings anniversaries, baptismal anniversaries, graduation, attention to young people who are away from home in college and military, concern for parents when children leave home...etc....

Note: If you don't want to be helpful to the other person with his particular problem at that time, don't pretend. Be open to the spirit and wait until you do. The other person will sense your sincerity or lack of it.

Accept the other person's feelings.

RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY...

3. Asking Appropriate Questions – One person suggested: "When in doubt about asking a question, DON'T" Many questions should not be asked; however, as one grows in knowledge of people and crisis, he/she will learn appropriate questions to ask.

- a. Avoid focusing on the facts
- b. Avoid Prying
- c. Avoid controlling the Conversation
- d. Avoid asking if you know the answer
- e. Ask feeling questions
- f. Ask clarifying questions

4. Responding Appropriately – Your intentions as you respond and the particular way you phrase a response are two important considerations in responding to another person.

5. Using Scripture and Prayer – Scripture and prayer, when used appropriately, give a person fresh awareness that life has meaning that stands above everyday tragedies and injustices. They may help the person feel a sense of support that goes beyond anything the deacon can bring.

A. Ask for permission – Unless you know beforehand, ask the other person for permission to pray.

B. Be Natural – Use natural comfortable voice when reading or praying. Be conversational. Avoid stilted, impersonal language in your prayer.

C. Select appropriate Scriptures – Choose scripture, which relates to the person's experience. Consider whether to use a traditional translation for familiarity or a more recent translation for clarity.

D. Make your prayer Meaningful. – Catch up whatever feelings have been expressed. Acknowledge in your prayer the feelings of joy, thankfulness, sorrow, hurt, anger, and resentment that the other person has shared.

6. Helping with the Problem Solving and Decision Making. – Much of the deacon's ministry can be described as problem solving. There are some helpful guidelines that can give clarity and direction to the problem-solving process. The challenge is to help the other attack the problem and find a solution if possible. If a solution is not possible, the deacon can help the other live with the problem.

A. Identify the problem...look for underlying issues beneath the emotion and hurt....

B. Let the right person own the problem. The bible teaches that every man is to bear his own burden alongside an equally important truth that: we are to bear one another's burdens; Gal. 6:2-5.

C. Consider the possible options.... Despair generally comes only to those who are not aware of options. Point them to other options that might be considered.

D. Encourage Decisiveness. Time and patience are always needed before a final decision can be reached. However, patience should not be confused with the avoidance of a decision that waits to be made.

7. Recognizing the importance of follow-up – Acts 6 records a breakdown in communication between the Jewish and Grecians sectors of the early church. Seven men were selected so the apostles could carry on the task of preaching. This lightened the burden as more shouldered the load of ministry. This is distribution of responsibility.

- A. Continue your personal Caring
- B. Refer when Appropriate
- C. Leave something to read.

Section III – Caring for the Hospitalized and their Families.

Prepare for the Visit. Prepare ahead for that moment when you walk across the threshold to actually greet the patient.

- Plan for Spiritual Ministry
- Imagine yourself in the others person's situation.
- Get in touch with your own feelings
- Heed hospital signs, visiting hours, the light, the closed door, the sleeping patients,

Help the Patient

- Listen more than you talk
- Speak to others
- Watch for visitor overload
- Be sensitive to the Patient's Comfort
- Let medical care take priority.

Provide Spiritual Ministry

- Share Yourself – your life's tests; mountains, valleys all drawn on HIS sufficient grace.
- Focus on God's Presence
- Read Appropriate Scriptures – Familiar passages: Romans 8: 26-28; Psalms 23, and Psalms 27:1; Ps. 121. Rev. 21:4
- Pray
- Inquire and help the patient's family in any ways possible
- Keep in touch.

Section IV. - Caring for the Bereaved.

Death and grief are universal experiences. Grief and mourning are terms to describe the anxiety that takes place when something is lost. That something may be a loss of a loved one, a marriage partner through divorce, the amputation of an arm or other limb, or the loss of a familiar community when one moves. All such actions tend to trigger anxiety because of a separation. Depression and despair are common to such a loss. This section focuses primarily on those who have lost loved ones.

Helping in a time of Grief.

- Use the power of your presence – go to members of the family to show by your presence that you do care enough to visit. Even a brief visit underscores your concern. Your presence communicates a concern.
- Provide practical support. – Be observant while you are there. Food is usually needed.
- Provide spiritual support – Read the scriptures when you are confident the message fits. There is no requirement to pray, but is usually always appreciated.

Helping Children through Grief:

- ❖ Provide honest and simple explanations
- ❖ Interpret death at their level of understanding.
- ❖ Help a child face his own death – the premonition that death is approaching.

Section V. Caring for Those Experiencing Spiritual Doubt and Guilt.

Doubt and guilt can be both constructive and destructive. Each of us should feel guilt when we have sinned against God, others, and ourselves. Guilt tells us something is wrong and can move us toward grace and forgiveness.

- A. Understanding the sources of Doubt and Guilt – Doubt and guilt do not appear out of a vacuum. They are caused by hard experiences of life. The roots of doubt and guilt can be traced to suffering, sin and the loss of self-worth.
- B. Suffering – tends to product spiritual doubt in one’s life. The relationship between suffering and doubt is focused in the experiences of Jesus on the cross: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, ...”My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?... Matt. 27:46.....
- C. Sin – An active church member began to attend irregularly. ..Later he confessed, “I’m not sure what I believe about God or anything else connected

with the church.....Later it was discovered that the member was having an affair with a co-worker...Doubt functioned as a diversion from needed guilt.

- D. Loss of Self-Worth – John 4 gives us the moving picture of Jesus and the woman at Jacob’s well in Samaria..... The woman is obviously suffering from a loss of self worth.

Helping Persons overcome doubt and Guilt.

- ✓ Recognize your own doubt and guilt – those who help the doubting and guilty must not be judgmental. There must be a capacity to identify.
- ✓ Love, Accept, Affirm – Take the initiative to reach out to the doubting and guilty. Example is God showed his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
- ✓ Respond to confession with forgiveness.
- ✓ Build a redemptive community

Section VI – Caring for the Lonely

Loneliness may be the biggest problem in our fragmented society. Many persons are uprooted and cut off from loved ones and significant persons who have made a difference. Many are lonely even in a crowd because there is no community.

A. Recognizing the Lonely

- Those who have lost significant persons
- The Institutionalized – Those in hospitals and nursing homes for long-term illnesses are often overwhelmed by a sense of loneliness. Persons in jail or prison have their own unique loneliness.
- Those alone at the top
- The Fearful

B. Helping the Lonely

- Be a Friend – Your presence is powerful
- Link with Others – Think about who can help..... Missionaries, Sunday school classes, choirs, meals on wheels, social groups, etc.

Section VII. Caring for Church Members in Conflict

The deacon has a special opportunity and challenge to look after the fellowship of the people to whom he ministers. Since conflict can injure and at times destroy a fellowship, the deacon has a responsibility to help others in his church make proper use of conflict. Sharp tensions and conflict are increasingly common within churches. Some deplore this and see it as an alien intrusion that destroys the harmonious fellowship characteristic of the Christian faith. Conflict is inevitable where people care about one another. The opposite of love is not conflict. It is apathy. In human communities it is not the presence but the absence of conflict that should be viewed with suspicion.

A. Appreciate the value of Diversity (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

- ❑ A typical congregation is made up of persons from different socioeconomic levels, different job experiences, varied preferences in music and worship.

B. Recognize one's own sin and failure (Jn. 8:3-11; Luke 6:41-42)

- ❑ So often our obsession with the sins of others blinds us to our own need to examine ourselves. (Woman in adultery/Speck in brother's eye)

C. Discovering greatness through service (Mark 9:33-35; 10:35-37, 41-45).

D. Accepting responsibility for initiative (Matt. 18:15-17)

E. Negotiating rather than retaliating or avoiding (Matt. 5:38-39)

F. Praying for your enemies (Matt. 5:43-48)

G. Being open to God's leading in New Directions (Acts 5:29-39)

H. Caring for the needs of Persons (Acts 6:1-7)

- I. Compromising for the sake of the Gospel (Acts 15:36-41)
 - Compromise is often necessary and can be constructive. In fact, much conflict cannot be resolved without some spirit-anointed compromising. Christians need to learn how to negotiate differences.
- J. Speaking the right word at the right time. (Ephesians 4:15; Proverbs 15:1)

Section VIII. Caring for Parents and Children in Conflict

“They now seem to love luxury, they have bad manners and contempt for authority, they show disrespect for adults and spend their time hanging around places gossiping with one another. They are ready to contradict their parents, monopolize the conversation and company, eat gluttonously, and tyrannize their teachers.” This statement from Socrates two thousand years ago speaks to the naturalness of conflict between parents and children, between youth and adults. This conflict is as natural as growing up is normal.

- A. Understanding Biblical Models of Parenthood - Conflict is a hallmark of the family and is altogether to be expected. Whenever change occurs, conflict can be expected. The Bible speaks to conflict in terms of broad principles and, at other times, becomes specific concerning parent-children relations.
- B. The parent-child relationship (Ephesians 5:21, 6:1-4)
- C. The Parent as a Teacher (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
- D. The Importance of Discipline (Hebrews 12:5-13)
- E. Freedom to fail or to Succeed (Luke 15:11-32)

Module – 9

Relationships

Topic: RELATIONSHIPS

Purpose: To learn how to improve relationships

Scripture References: I John 3:14; Matt 7:1-2; I Cor. 9:19; Heb. 10:24; I John 4:7; Mark 10:11-12; I Tim. 5:4

Discussion: Christianity is based on relationships. You have a relationship with your Lord. How you treat that relationship affects your whole life.

1. Cooperation with Others

Every effort should be made to maximize and encourage every member to make the most of his/her talents, skills and abilities. Most churches have a deacon assigned to members and clubs to assist in keeping peace, harmony, and giving counseling and guidance, as well as being a spiritual catalyst for those assigned members of clubs.

2. Relationship with God

Your relationship with God should be such that you will be able to reach Him in the Spirit. John reached Jesus in the Spirit when he could no longer reach Him in the flesh. It was on the Isle of Patmos where John saw the vision, which he gave in the Book of Revelation. Pursue Jesus and He will offer the same kind of relationship with you that he gave to His beloved disciple, John.

3. You vs. Other Christians

Deacons should love their Christian sisters and brothers as Christ loves them. Be very sensitive to the needs of other Christians who you may have chance to meet.

4. You vs. Non-Christians

God always make room for the unbeliever; you should too. Look at non-Christians through the eyes of Jesus and show them His hospitality. This would be a golden opportunity to witness to try to win souls to Christ.

5. You and Your Spouse, Children, Parents and Christian Friends

The first miracle performed by Jesus was at a wedding. God unites the husband and wife as one. Look up and underline in your Bibles Ephesians 5 for what God has to say on marriage relationships.

Your relationship with your children should be one that does not take priority over your relationship with your wife. Train up a child.

Module – 10

Training Requirement to become a deacon

TOPIC: TRAINING REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A DEACON

Purpose: To discover certain training required for one who is aspiring to become a deacon.

Scripture Reference: I Timothy 3:10 – 11

Note: Even though this topic has been spoken to previously, it now serves as a stand-alone block of instructions. It speaks to laity aspiring to the office of the deaconate.

Discussion: One of the instructions, which Paul gave to Timothy regarding deacons is: “And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.” Verse 11 of I Timothy 3 says, “Even so must their wives be grave, not slanders, sober, faithful in all things.”

A. Being Tested

Personnel for many occupations and professions are first given field training, internship, or on the job training. During this period of such training the problems which are encountered help the individual to become adjusted gradually, and avoid the shock, which would otherwise be harsh realities.

This means that the church should select as deacons those members who show by their lives that they are redeemed persons. But it is a well-known fact that many people who are newly elected do not know what their responsibilities are going to be, nor how to perform them.

Training for new prospective deacons should include intensive Bible study, leading various programs of the church and outreach ministries under the tutelage of a well-seasoned deacon, brief periods of actually teaching Bible study, counseling church members (again under the tutelage of a well-seasoned deacon). Leading visitation of the sick and shut-ins, memorizing certain portions of scriptures as they relate to the ordinances, the Trinity and numerous other Baptist doctrines.

Some churches have structured training sessions for deacons, which include, but are not limited to, practicing the re-enactment of the Lord’s Supper, simulation of baptismal exercises, and administration of communion.

B. Ordination/Consecration

Some churches induct deacons at an ordination service, which may include quizzing the candidates on Biblical passages they should know. Others include ordination service in conjunction with consecration so that deacons may be fully set-aside at the same time.

APPENDIX D
DEACONS' LEADERSHIP SELF EVALUATION

LEADERSHIP SELF-EVALUATION HOW EFFECTIVE IS MY LEADERSHIP? (Rate Yourself)	Outstanding	Good	Fair
A spiritually motivated Disciple			
Dependable and Reliable			
Well Organized			
Prayerfully concerned over kingdom work issues			
A good listener			
Temperate (calm)			
Open-minded			
Enables others to grow			
Delegates authority			
Acknowledge my own mistakes			
Positive attitude			
Patient			
Fair in dealing with others			
Appreciates view points of others			

Some barriers and hindrances to our leadership (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Too talkative
- Judgmental
- Immaturity in spiritual growth
- Negative attitude
- Frustration
- Making derogatory remarks
- Trying to impress others by style of speech, mannerism.
- Ignoring the viewpoints of others
- Jealousy

APPENDIX E
PRE/POSTTEST QUESTIONNAIRE

PRETEST/POST TEST QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DEACONS

Answer the following questions using the following scale to record your answers. Circle the number that best corresponds to your opinion, where

(Example)

(1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree)

1. A good definition of “Servant leadership” is: “The authority to influence others to achieve the goals of an organization.”

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

2. Designated Authority makes you a good Leader.

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

3. One is not qualified to give orders until he/she can receive them.

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

4. One of the main functions of the deacon is to “assist the pastor.”

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

5. Characteristics of a good leader would not necessarily include the following: Personality, patience, self-control, kindness, and a spirit of compassion.

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

6. The word “deacon” is derived from the Greek word “*diakonos*” which means “servant.”

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

7. The origin of deacons and the basic qualifications and role of a deacon are set out in Titus 3: 1-4 and I Timothy 3:8-12.

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

8. Deacons should possess “wisdom” above and beyond the average layperson.

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

9. In the early New Testament church, the Apostles requested that the church select seven men of “good taste, full of strength and of intelligence.”

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

10. The deacon should be the nearest link to the spiritual needs of the congregation.

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

11. A Deacon’s role in worship includes overseeing preparation for all worship services as well as participating in carrying out worship activities.

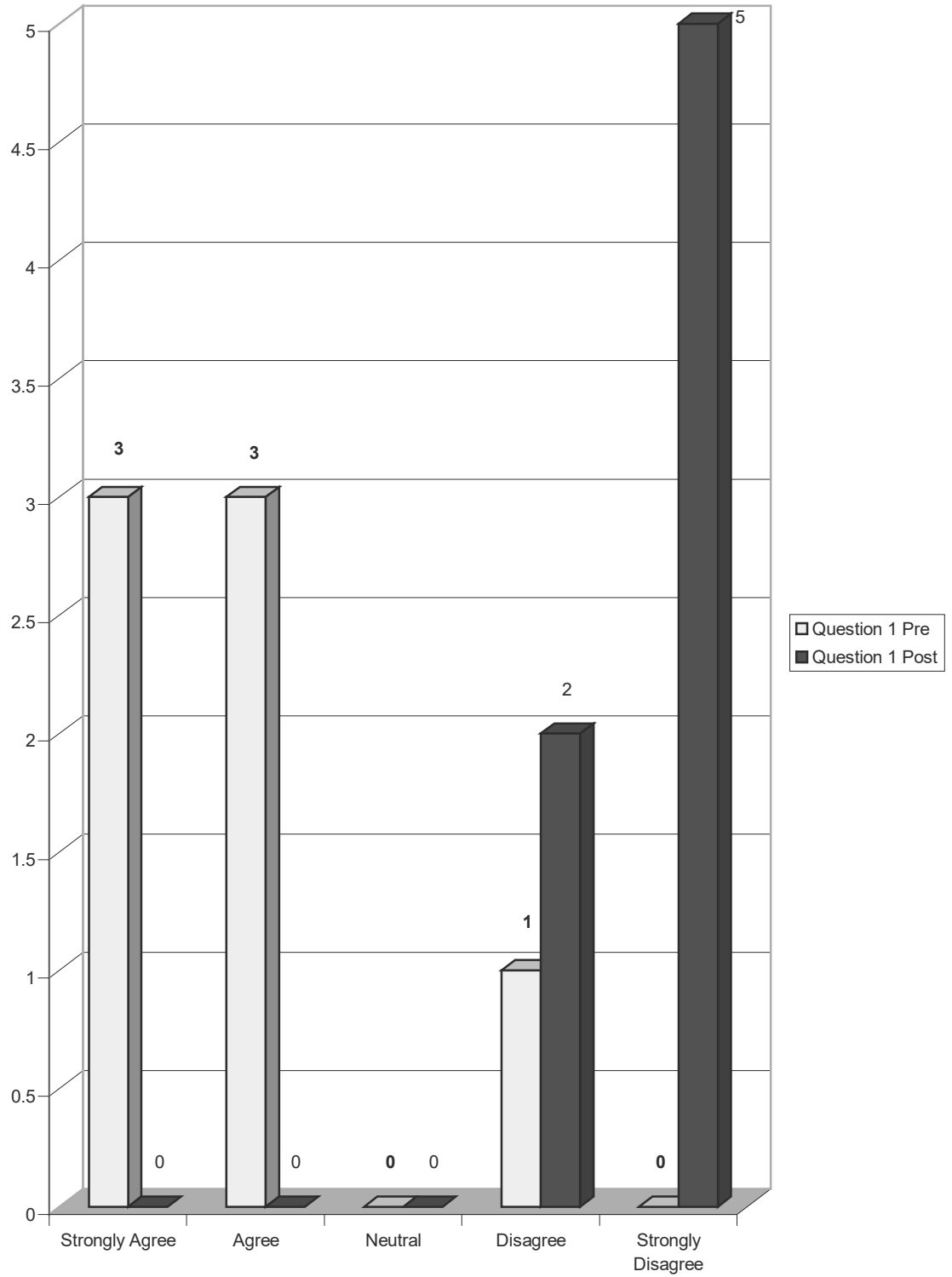
1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

12. The two scriptural ordinances of the Baptist church are: The Lord’s Supper and the Right Hand of Fellowship.

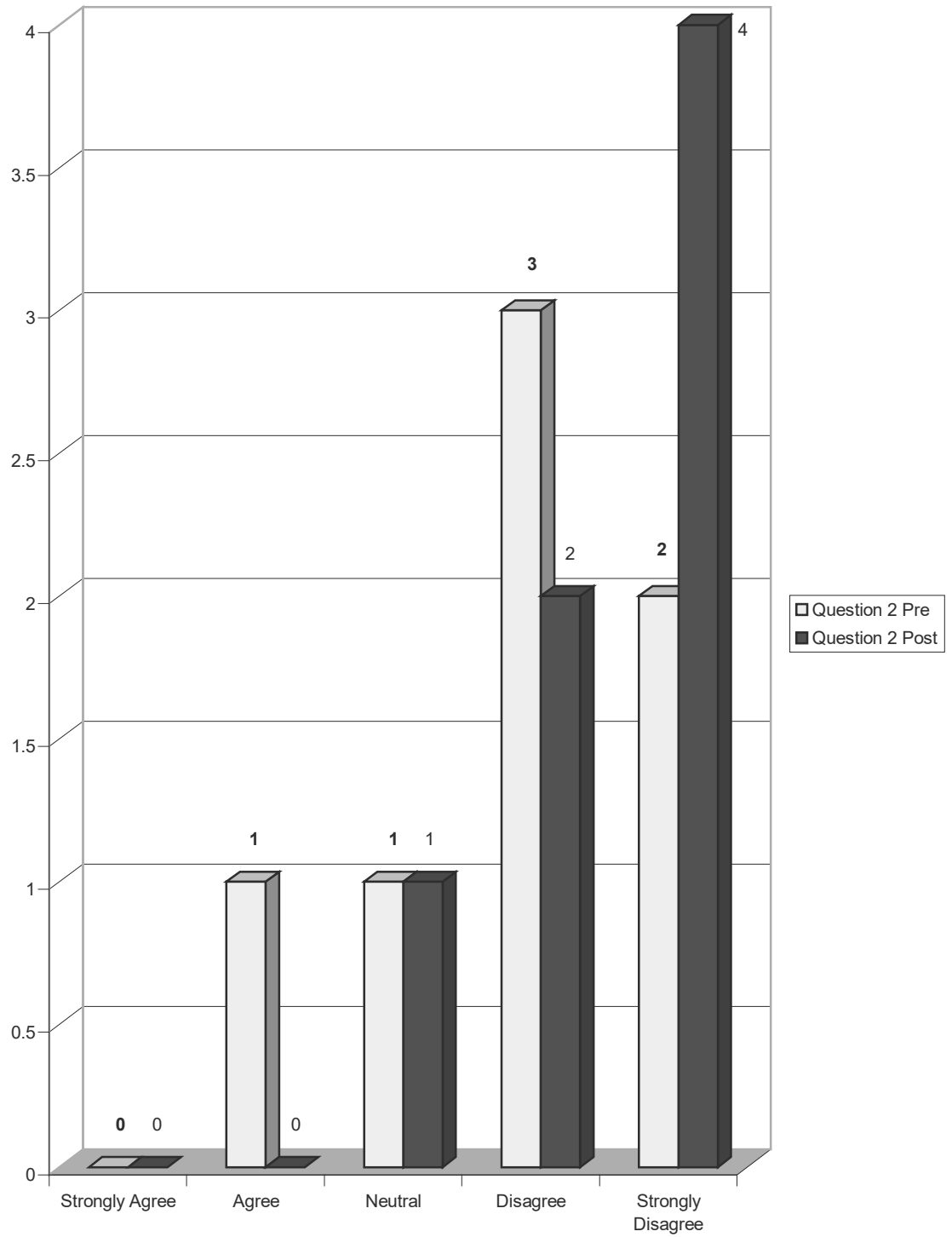
1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX F
PRE/POSTTEST ANALYSIS (CHARTS)

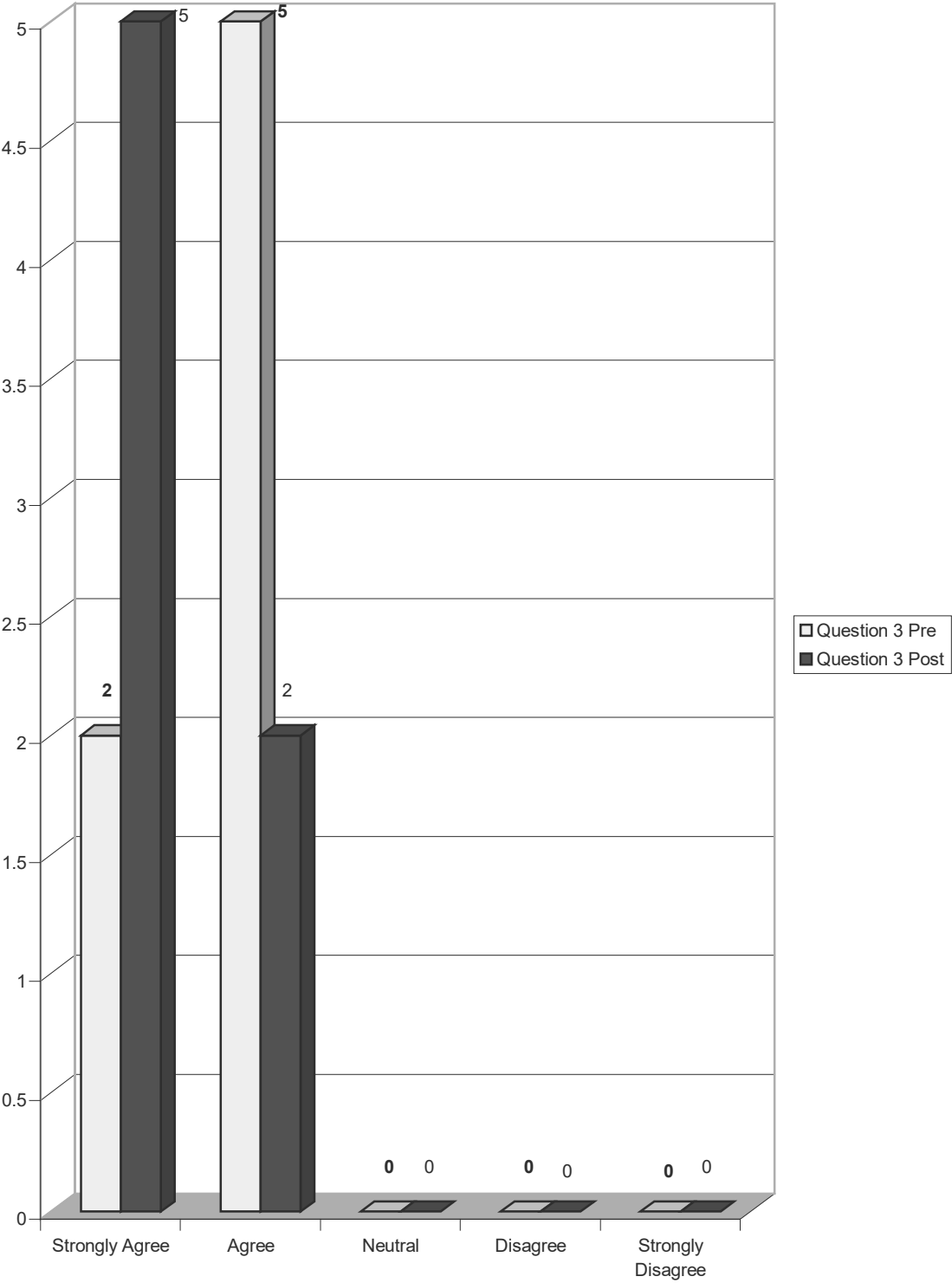
Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #1 Pre & Post Results



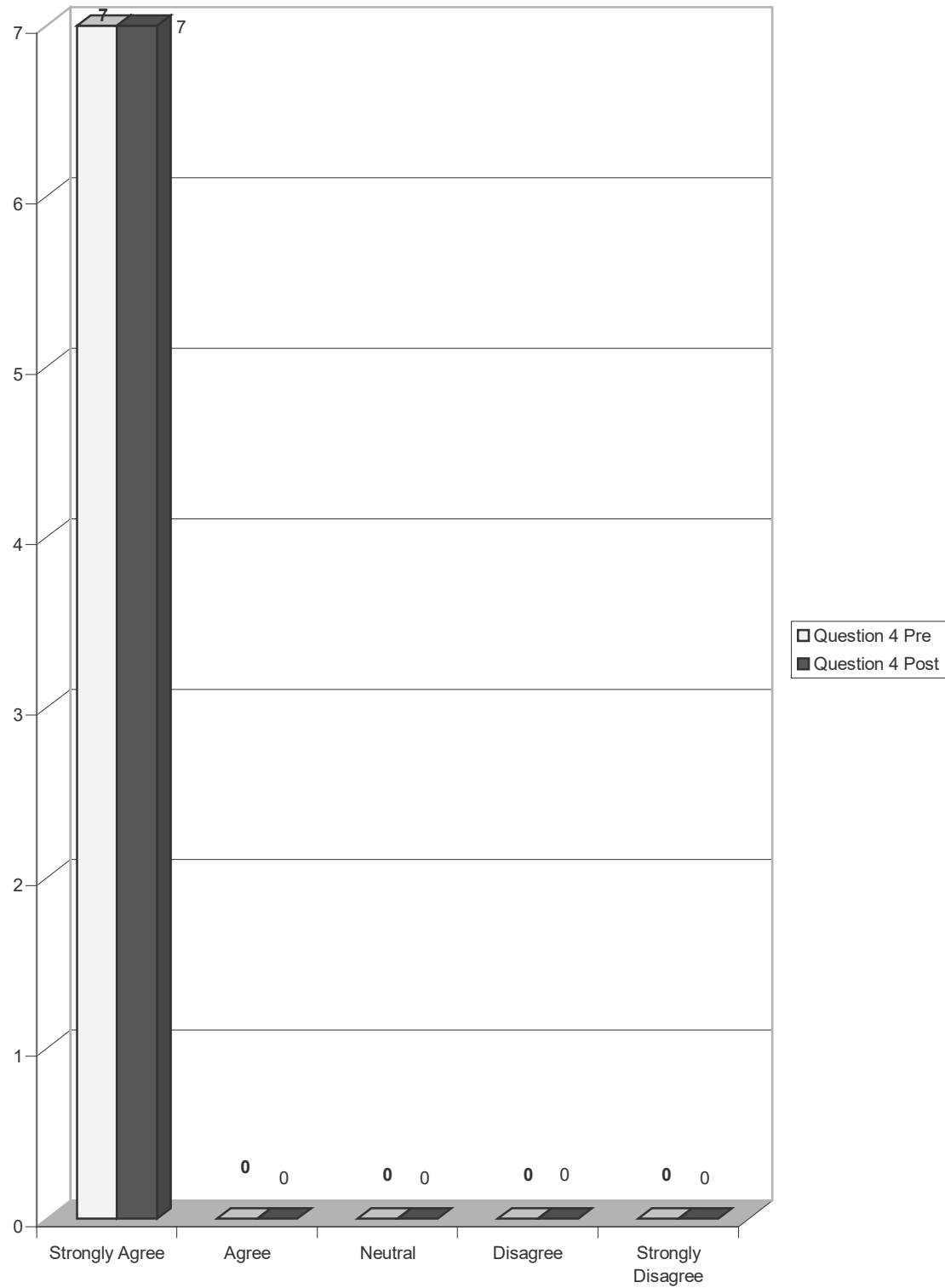
Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #2 Pre & Post Results



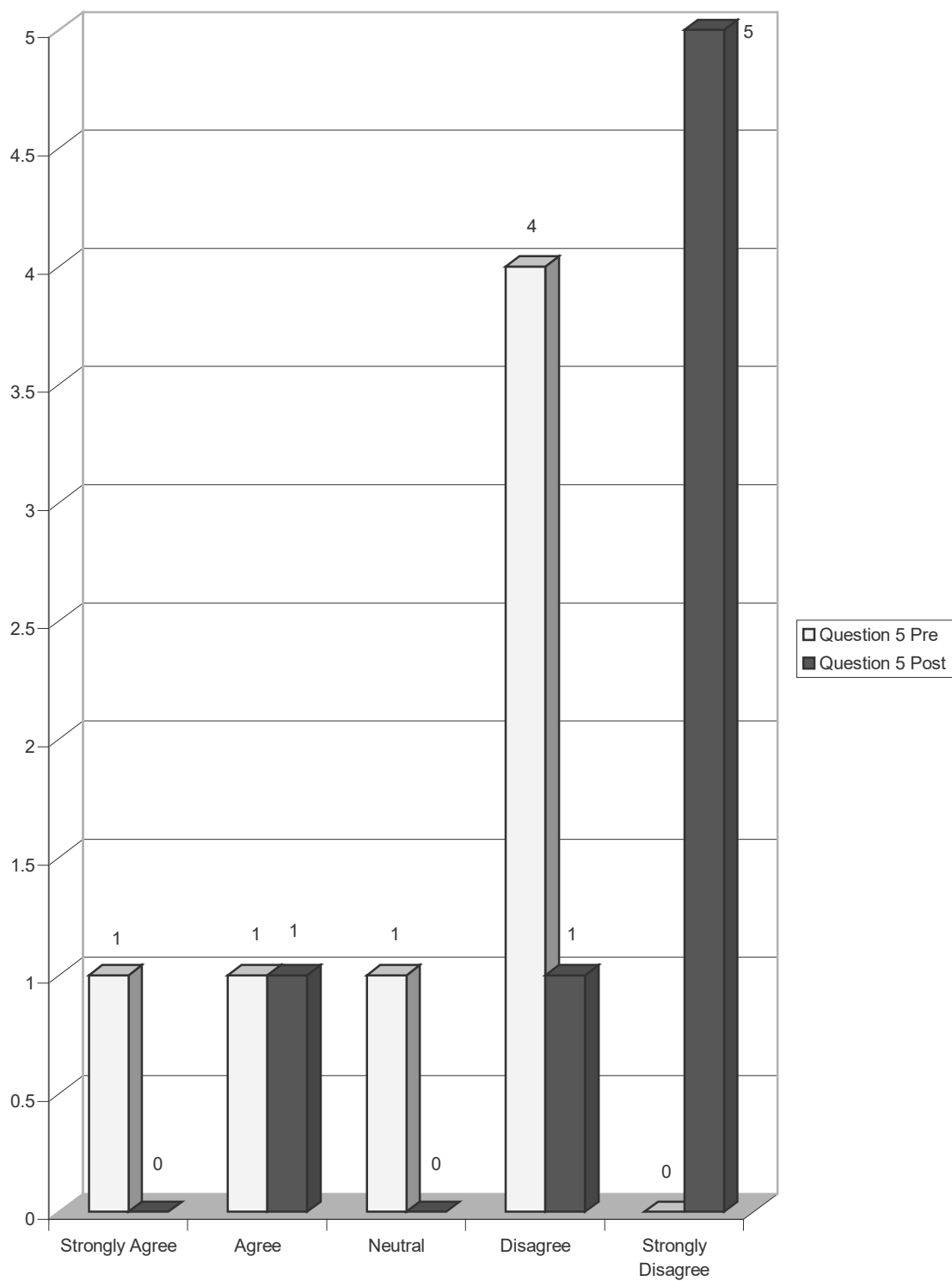
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Question #3 Pre & Post Results



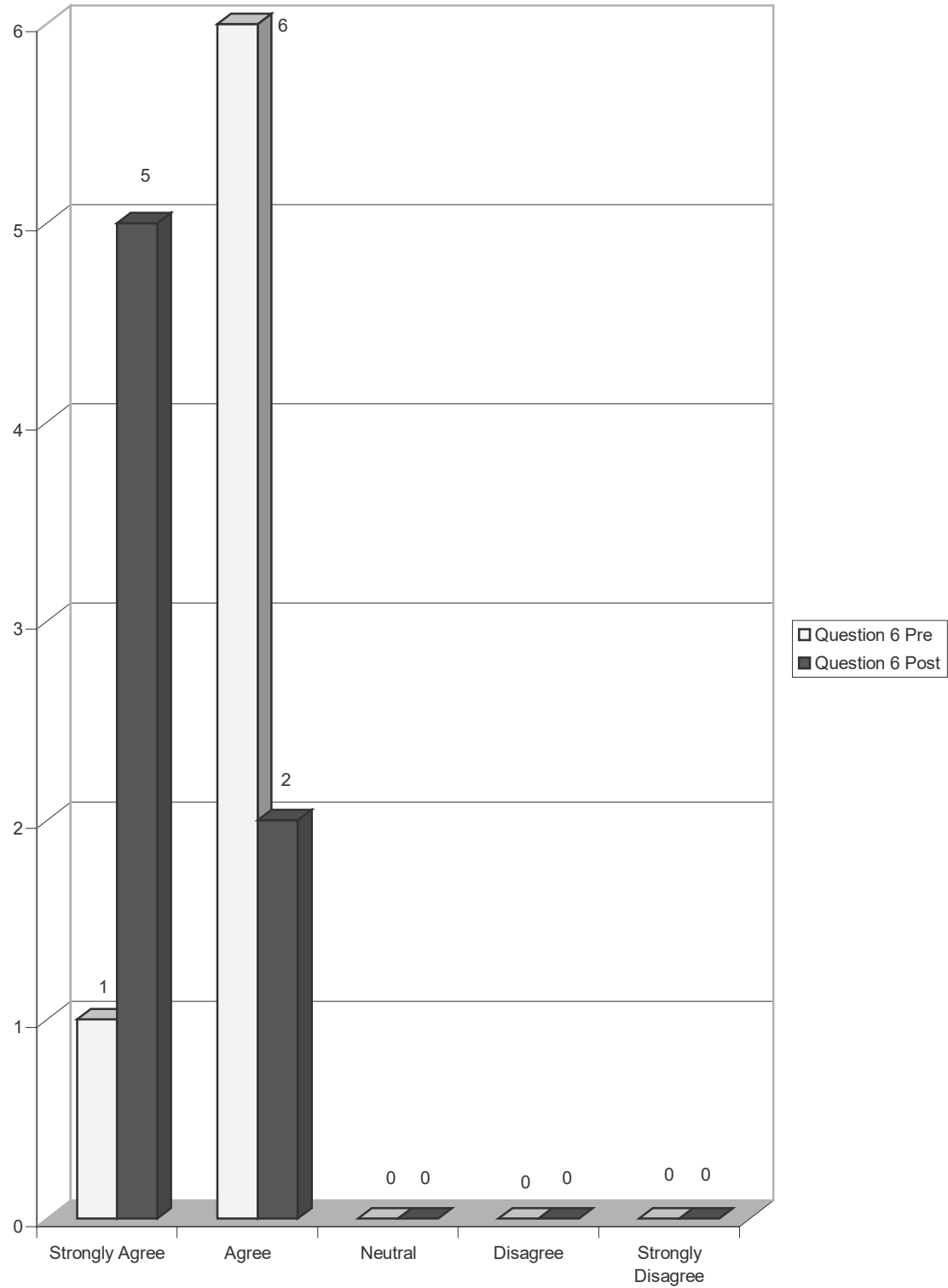
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Question #4 Pre & Post Results



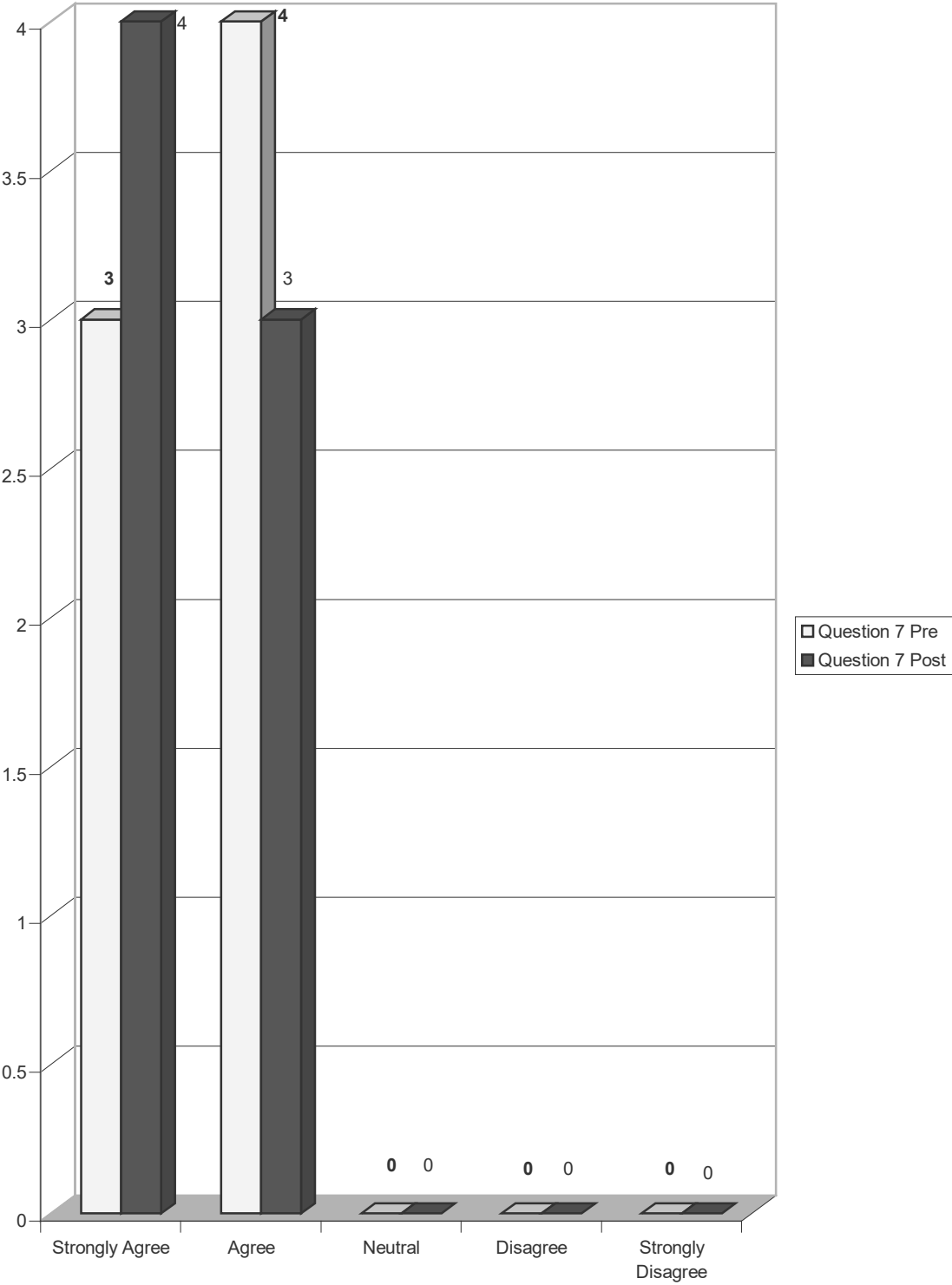
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Question #5 Pre & Post Results



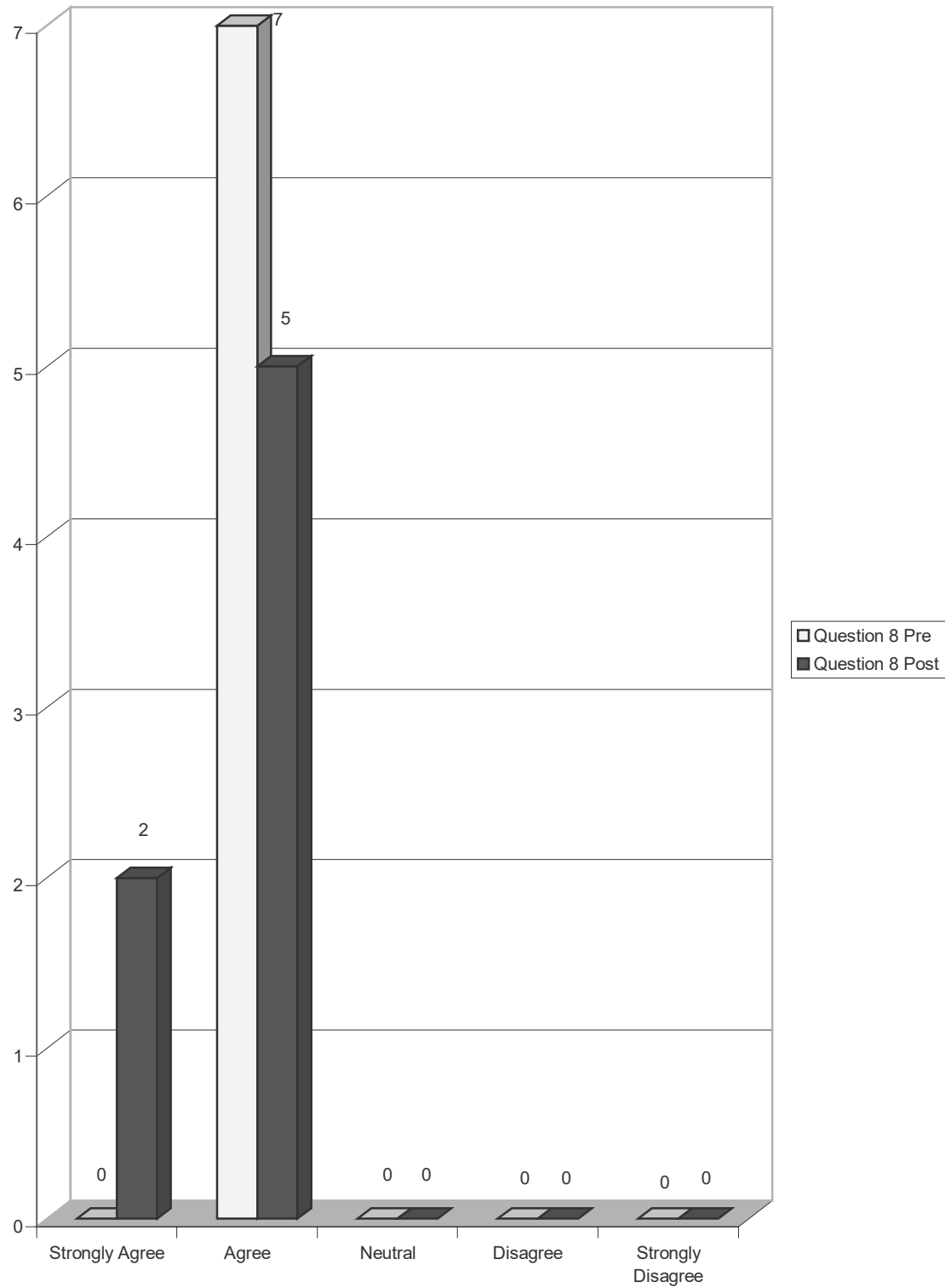
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Question #6 Pre & Post Results



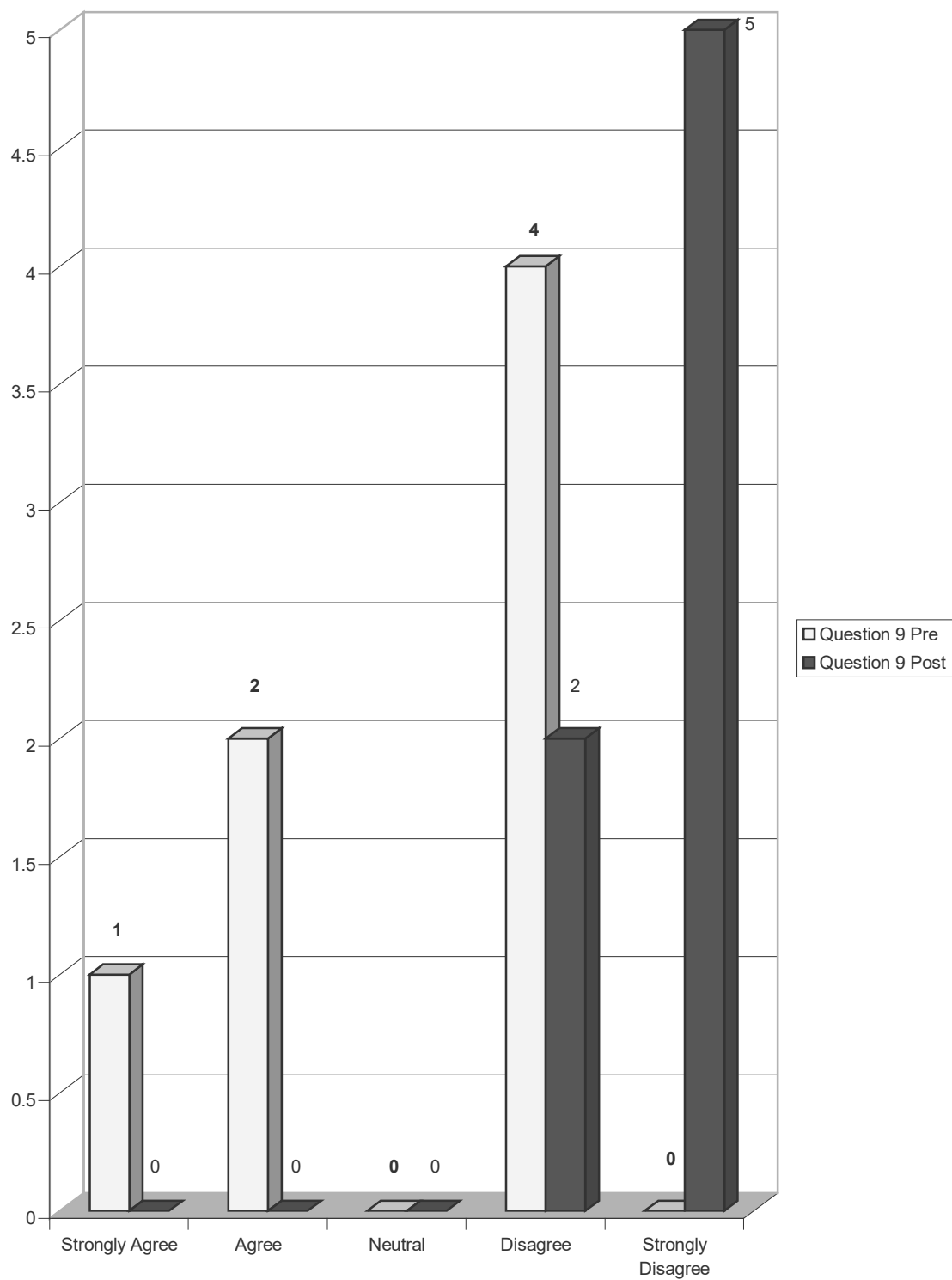
Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #7 Pre & Post Results



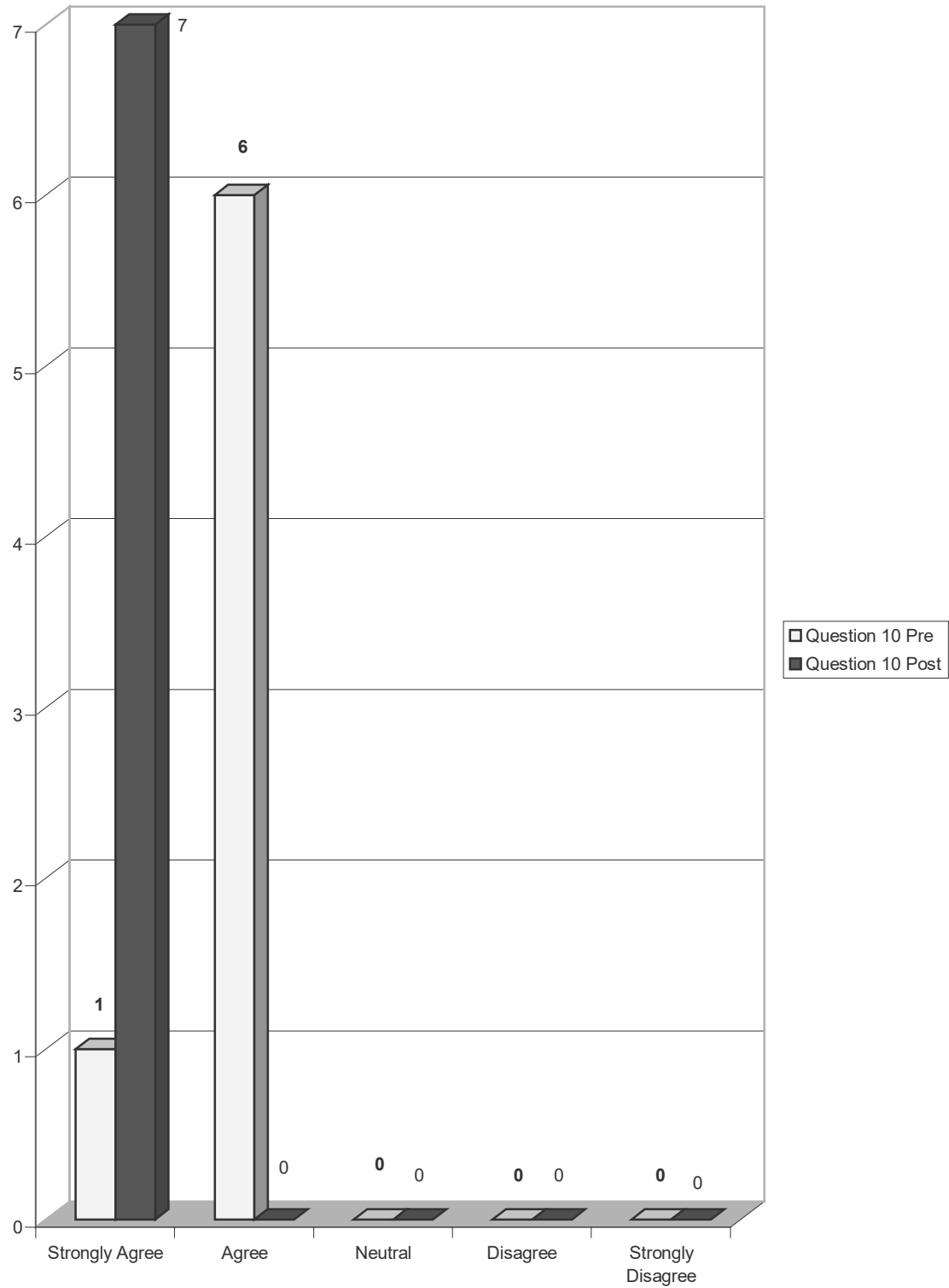
Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #8 Pre & Post Results



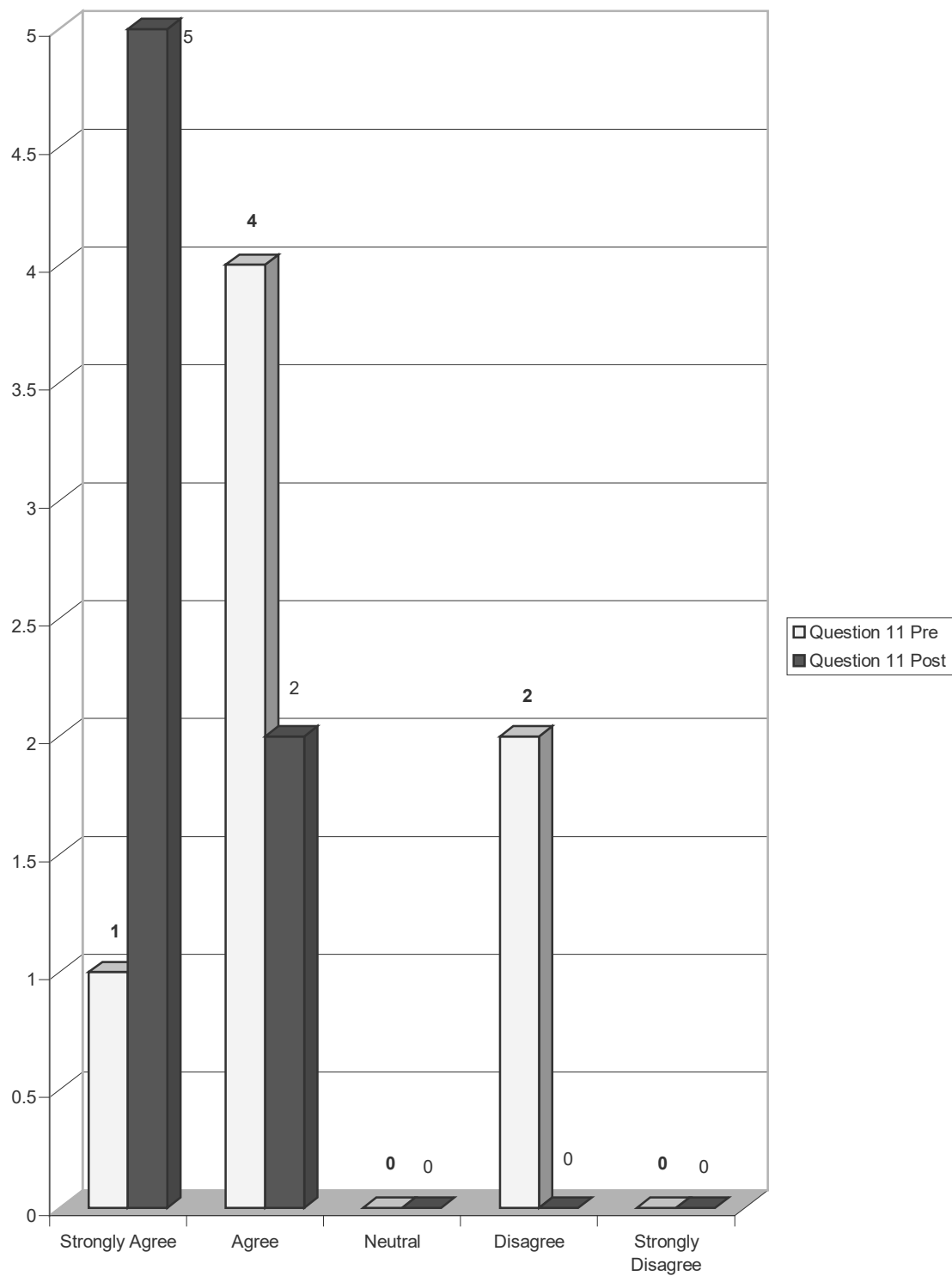
Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #9 Pre & Post Results



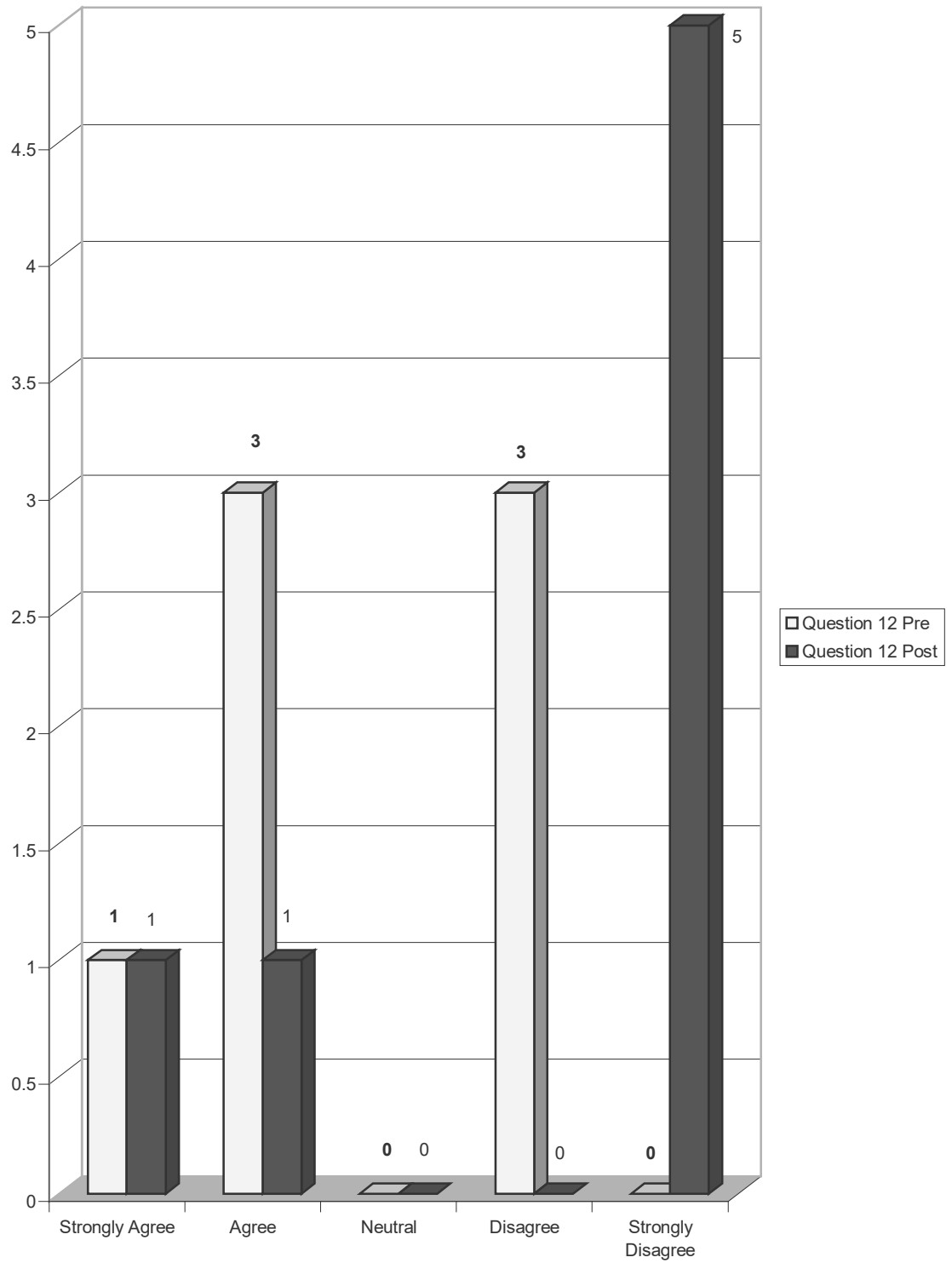
Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #10 Pre & Post Results



Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #11 Pre & Post Results



Pre/Post Test Survey Deacons' Training RSBC
Question #12 Pre & Post Results



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